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## Violence roils Afghanistan

### Taliban attack in Kabul kills 6

By AMIR SHAH  
Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — A brazen Taliban attack that targeted the Kabul offices of a British security company killed five of its staffers, including

a British national, the company said Thursday. Afghan authorities said a sixth person was also killed in the assault.

Charlie Burbridge, the managing director of G4S Risk Management Group, said 32 employees of the company were also wounded in the attack, five of them seriously.

**SEE ATTACK ON PAGE 6**

### US servicemembers killed by roadside bomb blast identified

By CHAD GARLAND  
AND  
PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN  
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Described as a daredevil who was driven to suc-

ceed in the Air Force and the toughest person his family knew, Staff Sgt. Dylan Elchin was planning to marry his fiancée when he returned home from Afghanistan in January.

**SEE IDENTIFIED ON PAGE 6**

A member of the Afghan security forces walks past the debris following the suicide bomb attack targeting a British security firm in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Thursday.

RAHMAT GUL/AP



## Hundreds of servicemembers targeted by prison inmates in sextortion ring

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Five people were arrested and five prisoners served summonses Wednesday for their roles in a sextortion ring in which inmates from South Carolina used online dating sites and social media forums to target hundreds of servicemem-

bers and coerce more than \$500,000 from them, Naval Criminal Investigative Services announced.

NCIS spokesman Jeff Houston said the sextortion ring was based out of multiple prison facilities in South Carolina, but he would not identify which ones.

The arrests and summonses for money laundering, extortion and wire fraud were

part of the first phase of Operation Surprise Party, which was initiated in January 2017, according to a NCIS news release. The Defense Criminal Investigative Service, Army Criminal Investigation Command and Air Force Office of Special Investigations participated in the NCIS investigation, along with other local and federal law enforcement agencies.

NCIS officials did not identify the people charged in the ring.

With help from people outside of prison, the inmates found and targeted servicemembers online by engaging in fictional romantic relationships and then extorting them for money, according to NCIS.

**SEE SEXTORTION ON PAGE 8**

## MILITARY

# Senators move to end US role in Yemen

By CLAUDIA GRISALES  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Senate on Wednesday voted to move a legislative measure forward that could end the U.S. military role in Yemen and its support of the Saudi-led coalition there, effectively rebuking pleas from White House officials to dismiss the plan.

In a procedural vote late Wednesday, senators voted 63 to 37 for an upper chamber debate on the resolution to reverse U.S. support of the Saudis in war-torn Yemen.

The vote increases pressure on the White House to re-evaluate its current direction in Yemen, as well as push for a peaceful resolution of the country's ongoing civil war.

The move comes on the heels of a closed-door meeting in the Capitol earlier Wednesday between senators and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Mattis and Pompeo urged the senators to thwart the resolution.

"That was the mission today, to try to stop this movement among senators to be very public about their disapproval of what's going on with the U.S. support of the Saudi

coalition," said Kurt Couchman, vice president of Public Policy for Defense Priorities, a right-leaning Washington think tank.

The resolution now heads to a full floor Senate debate in the coming days.

Sens. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt.; Mike Lee, R-Utah; and Chris Murphy, D-Conn., introduced Joint Resolution 54 in March, forcing a vote on the Yemen matter for the first time. The resolution was effectively rejected in a 53 to 44 vote, largely along party lines with Republicans voting against the measure.

Since that time, support for Saudi Arabia has diminished, especially in light of Washington Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi's slaying at the country's consulate in Turkey.

"We sent an important message today — that Congress will stand up to Saudi leadership when [President Donald Trump's] administration won't, and that Saudi Arabia will face consequences for the murder of Virginia resident Jamal Khashoggi as well as for the disastrous war in Yemen," said Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va. "We must cease support for this war — never authorized by Congress — which has taken thousands of lives and finally demand accountability for the Saudi regime's continued human rights abuses."

U.S. forces have provided support for Saudi Arabia and the Yemen government in their fight against Iran-backed Houthi rebels, which some lawmakers contend the U.S. military has not been given proper authority to do. The U.S. forces have assisted in coordinating, refueling and providing target guidance and intelligence to the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen.



PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVAIS/AP

**Secretary of State Mike Pompeo speaks to members of the media after a closed-door meeting with senators about Saudi Arabia in Washington on Wednesday.**

Earlier Wednesday, Mattis and Pompeo told senators in a private meeting the United States was at a critical juncture in the Yemen confrontation and couldn't afford to withdraw at this time.

"Pulling back our limited U.S. military support, our weapons sales to our partners, and our protection of the Saudi and Emirati populations would be misguided on the eve of the promising initial negotiations," Mattis said, according to prepared remarks. "It took us too long to get here, but at this key juncture, a change in our approach would work against" United Nations efforts.

Democrats have said after winning the House in the midterm elections earlier this month that they would push for greater oversight of U.S. operations and look at efforts to withdraw the U.S. pres-

ence in Yemen, with some Republicans echoing the concerns.

Mattis and Pompeo were at the Capitol on Wednesday as part of a White House effort to push against such a resolution. Peace talks involving all sides of the Yemen civil war are slated to take place in Sweden as early as next week.

"The view of the administration, Secretary Mattis and myself is that passing a resolution at this point undermines that," Pompeo said in comments to reporters following the meeting. "It would encourage the Houthis. It would encourage the Iranians."

"It would undermine the fragile agreement for everyone to go to Sweden and have this discussion."

The 11 a.m. meeting Wednesday wasn't without controversy, with some lawmakers and pundits questioning why CIA Director Gina Haspel wasn't included in the briefing with senators. As senators exited Wednesday's meeting, some of them said Haspel wasn't at the meeting at the direction of the White House, according to news reports.

Mattis, in his remarks, said if the United States was to pull its support, it would disrupt ongoing efforts by U.N. Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and breathe new life into the Houthis' combat operations, just as they are reluctantly engaging with a U.N. interlocutor.

In his prepared remarks, Pompeo said abandoning Yemen would do immense damage to U.S. national security interests and the interests of its Middle East allies and partners. He also suggested Griffiths' efforts are gaining momentum.

Mattis and Pompeo called for a ceasefire on Oct. 30, with the goal of causing all sides to take a step

back from the fighting, Pompeo said in his remarks.

Questions about U.S. support of Saudi Arabia have grown in the wake of the death of Khashoggi after the Virginia resident visited the Saudi consulate in Turkey. Subsequent reports of recordings and other intelligence tied to the meeting have detailed Khashoggi's brutal slaying at the hands of several Saudi officials.

"Our security interests cannot be dismissed, even as we seek accountability for what President Trump described as the 'unacceptable and horrible crime' of Jamal Khashoggi's murder, a crime which 'our country does not condone,'" Mattis said in quoting Trump. "We must maintain our twin requirements of holding those responsible for the murder to account while recognizing the reality of Saudi Arabia as a necessary strategic partner."

However, Trump's comments about Khashoggi's death have been met with its share of controversy, since the president hasn't fully agreed with U.S. intelligence reports suggesting the Saudi crown prince directed the killing.

Pompeo and Mattis on Wednesday appeared aligned with Trump's take on the intelligence.

Regardless, Mattis said the United States should not be deterred from its effort to aid others who are innocent.

"We cannot be deflected from using all our influence to end this war for the good of innocent people in trouble, and ultimately the safety of our own people, and this includes our military engagement," he said.

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## Correction

A Nov. 29 story should have said that U.S. Africa Command Gen. Thomas Waldhauser last visited Somalia in December 2017 prior to his visit on Tuesday.

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## COMMEMORATING THE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR

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DECEMBER 7TH.

## PACIFIC

## Koreas' railway survey to begin

By KIM GAMEL  
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — Dorasan Station, the last train stop before the heavily fortified border with North Korea, has long been a popular tourist spot, with visitors buying symbolic tickets to walk onto the platform and peer in the direction of the communist state.

On Friday, it will see some real action as South Korea sends a train into the North for the first time in more than a decade.

The two Koreas will begin an 18-day joint field survey of railway sections in the east and the west after the U.N. Security Council granted the necessary exemption to sanctions imposed on the North over its nuclear weapons program.

The inspection is the latest step toward improving relations between the rival nations despite slow progress in U.S.-led nuclear talks. Washington has warned its longtime ally Seoul against moving too fast with the rapprochement without significant progress in persuading the North to give up its banned weapons program.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un agreed to "adopt practical steps toward the connection and modernization of the railways and roads" in the two transportation corridors during their first summit on April 27.

Moon has dangled the project as part of economic incentives for the North to abandon its nuclear program and join the international fold. South Korea also stands to gain as railway connections could provide new land routes to China, opening valuable trade opportunities.

The Security Council's decision applied only to the survey, and future efforts will require new exemptions, according to the Foreign Ministry.

South Korean locomotive will lead six other rail cars from Seoul Station to Dorasan Station

early Friday.

Following a farewell ceremony, they will roll across the border to Panmun Station in North Korea, the government said in a statement. At that point, a North Korean locomotive will replace the South Korean version.

Inspectors will start with a roughly 250-mile section of railway running from the cities of Kaesong to Sinuiju on the western Gyeongui Line from Friday to Wednesday, according to the joint statement released by the Unification Ministry and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transportation.

Officials will then survey about 500 miles of tracks between Mount Kumgang and the Duman River on the eastern Donghae Line on Dec. 8-17, it said, adding that the number of North Korean rail cars that will participate has not been determined.

The journey, which will carry officials a total of about 1,615 miles, will end in Kaesong, where a South Korean locomotive will reattach and lead the rail cars back to Seoul Station.

"We're planning to check North Korea's railway facilities and system and so on," the ministries said. "We'll push ahead with working-level discussions, including sharing the outcome of the inspection with North Korean members of the joint survey group."

It will be the first such field survey on the western section since 2007 and the first-ever on the eastern section since the division of the peninsula after World War II, the statement said.

Officials stressed that any construction would depend on "progress in North Korea's denuclearization," but held out hope that a groundbreaking ceremony could be held by the end of the year.

Stars and Stripes reporter Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this report.  
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PHOTOS BY THERON GODBOLD/Stars and Stripes

Eleven C-130J Super Hercules aircraft from the 36th Airlift Squadron participate in the Samurai Surge exercise at Yokota Air Base, Japan, on Thursday.

## Super Hercules, Samurai Surge exercise begins in western Tokyo

By THERON GODBOLD  
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Eleven C-130J Super Hercules aircraft took off in succession Thursday in a choreographed demonstration of their pilots' ability to work together and in proximity.

The exercise, called Samurai Surge, evaluates the ability of base operations and the 36th Airlift Squadron to mobilize and maneuver many aircraft in a short time.

It also demonstrates the C-130's capability for low-level flight and delivery of heavy-equipment payloads. One at a time, each of the Super Hercs dropped a single sandbag from its rear cargo door, aiming for a target on the grass airfield median.

Air Force Capt. Devon Alford, a pilot who flew during the exercise, said he didn't hear of anyone



C-130J Super Hercules aircraft from the 36th Airlift Squadron take off at Yokota Air Base on Thursday.

missing their targets.

"We take many safety precautions; especially, we brief very thoroughly what we are going to do as a formation so that we are very safe, and we follow all of

our procedures," he said. "We ensure that our drops zones are in parameters to drop safely so that way we put our bundles on target."

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## Navy ships steam through Taiwan Strait in prelude to US-China talks at G-20

By WYATT OLSON  
Stars and Stripes

A pair of Navy ships sailed through the Taiwan Strait on Wednesday, just days before President Donald Trump is expected to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping during the Group of 20 summit in Argentina.

The destroyer USS Stockdale and the replenishment oiler USNS Pecos made a "routine" transit that "demonstrates the U.S. commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific," Pacific Fleet spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Tim Gorman said in a

statement.

"The U.S. Navy will continue to fly, sail and operate anywhere international law allows," he added.

China objects to Navy warships sailing the roughly 100-mile-wide strait that divides the Chinese mainland from self-ruled Taiwan, which split from China in 1949 at the end of a civil war.

China regards Taiwan as a renegade province that must one day be reunified with the mainland.

Navy ships most recently passed through the strait in July and Oc-

tober. After the October transit of a destroyer and a cruiser, the state-run China Daily newspaper criticized the Trump administration for "playing a high-stakes game backing Taipei."

China has been flexing the growing might and reach of its navy, holding its largest-ever fleet review in April in the South China Sea near the coast of Hainan Province.

Attended by Xi, the fleet review included 48 ships, among them the country's only operational aircraft carrier, China state

media reported.

The South China Sea is frequently the flashpoint between China and the U.S. Navy, which conducts regular freedom-of-navigation transits near disputed islands in the South China Sea. China, Vietnam, Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei have asserted varying degrees of sovereignty over those islands.

The aircraft carriers USS Ronald Reagan and USS John C. Stennis held joint drills off the coast of the Philippines earlier this month

near the disputed Spratly Islands. China has expanded some Spratly atolls by dredging sand and then building military facilities and other infrastructure upon them.

During the carrier drills, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told reporters in Beijing that the "pretext" of freedom-of-navigation operations by the United States was "undermining the sovereignty and security interests" of nations bordering the South China Sea.

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## EUROPE

# NATO hesitant to move ships into Sea of Azov

By JOHN VANDIVER  
Stars and Stripes

Ukraine's president urged NATO on Thursday to send warships into the Sea of Azov, as President Donald Trump announced he was canceling a planned meeting with Russia's president over the seizure of Ukrainian ships and crews this week.

President Petro Poroshenko, in an interview with the German Bild newspaper, said "we hope that in NATO, states are now ready to relocate naval ships to the Sea of Azov in order to assist Ukraine and provide security."

So far the U.S.-led alliance has shown no interest in forcing its way into waters under Russian control.

However, Trump announced a tweet that he would no longer meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin, which had been set for noon Dec. 1 at the Group of 20 summit in Argentina.

On Sunday, Russian military forces fired upon three Ukrainian vessels attempting to pass through the Kerch Strait — a narrow passage that connects the Black Sea to the Sea of Azov. Moscow seized the ships and captured about 23 sailors, marking a major escalation between two countries that have been at odds since Russia's 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula.

Poroshenko, who declared martial law in parts of his country earlier this week, also said he is worried that Moscow is planning a new ground offensive to annex more Ukrainian territory.

On Sunday, Russian military forces fired upon three Ukrainian vessels attempting to pass through the Kerch Strait — a narrow passage that connects the Black Sea to the Sea of Azov. Moscow seized the ships and captured about 23 sailors, marking a major escalation between two countries that

have been at odds since Russia's 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula.

Moscow blamed Ukraine for the clash, saying that the ships failed to provide proper transit notifications, which Kiev and Western states have dismissed as false. So far, the West has offered condemnations of Russia's attack on Ukrainian ships but made no move to sanction Russia.

It is unlikely NATO would agree to send ships into the Sea of Azov — a body of water defined in a bilateral agreement as internal to Russia and Ukraine, though some maritime law experts theorize that a small portion of the central sea could be considered international waters.

Russia also controls access to Azov as the Kerch Strait, which means sending warships in a show of force could risk a dangerous escalation. There are also operational limits on what allied ships



JUSTIN STUMBERG/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

**The destroyer USS Porter and the command and control ship USS Mount Whitney sail in the Black Sea during exercise Sea Breeze on July 13. Ukraine's president wants NATO to send warships into the neighboring Sea of Azov.**

could be deployed to the Sea of Azov, which in many places is too shallow for larger vessels, such as destroyers, to operate.

However, the U.S. and NATO navies regularly patrol the Black Sea and could opt to increase those missions. Commercial aviation trackers also show that U.S. surveillance aircraft are a regular presence in the Black Sea and around the Kerch Strait.

On Tuesday, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and other NATO foreign ministers will gath-

er in Brussels for high-level talks in which they are expected to discuss the clash at sea. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has said the alliance was still assessing how to respond.

Poroshenko said the West should show solidarity with Ukraine if it wants to contain Russia under Putin.

"The only language he understands is the unity of the Western world," Poroshenko said.

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## Reports of possible rabies cases up in southern Germany

By NANCY MONTGOMERY  
Stars and Stripes

Reports of possible exposures to rabies, the deadly virus that killed a soldier seven years ago, more than doubled in southern Germany-based troops in 2016 primarily because of deployments to Egypt and Eastern Europe, according to a new report.

The study published this month in the military Medical Surveillance Monthly Report found 108 possible exposures to rabies in troops assigned to Bavarian garrisons, up from 51 the year before.

None of the people in the study became ill, and whether any animals involved were actually rabid was unknown in many cases. In other cases, the animals were proven rabies-free.

But for 63 people, the risk of infection with the virus — invariably fatal once symptoms emerge — was considered to be sufficient for treatment.

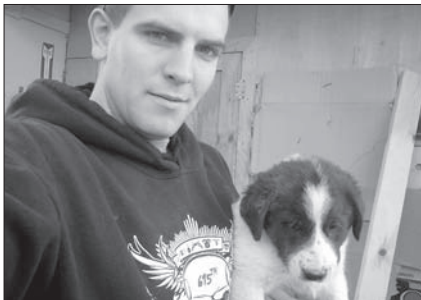
"Because it's preventable and it's such a terrible disease, we treat if we don't know," said Maj. Luke Mease, a doctor of preventive medicine at the U.S. Army Medical Department Activity-Bavaria and the report's lead author.

Rabies is transmitted through the exchange of blood or saliva from an infected mammal, including cats, dogs, bats and humans. It attacks the nervous system and brain, ending in paralysis, convulsions and a painful death.

It kills more than 50,000 people a year, mostly in Asia and Africa.

Mease and veterinarians initiated the study after noticing increasing reports of animal bites filed in 2016 on a standard Army form.

In addition to the 50 or so animal



Courtesy of Elaine Taylor

**Spc. Kevin Shumaker holds a puppy on Combat Outpost Base Chiamkan, Afghanistan. Shumaker died of rabies in August 2011, seven months after being bitten by a dog on the base.**

reports of dog bites from German or U.S. pets collected since 2011, which carry little risk, there were 37 reports from units that had deployed to the U.S. element of the United Nations peacekeeping force in the Sinai Peninsula, along with a dozen more from Eastern Europe.

The reports concerned Mease. It was a Grafenwoehr-based soldier whose 2011 rabies death — the first confirmed in the military in 40 years — revealed a series of tragic mistakes and omissions.

Spc. Kevin Shumaker, a cook with the 615th Military Police Company, had mentioned the bite to a veterinarian in Afghanistan three months after he was bitten. He had reported it on his post-deployment form. But no one fol-

lowed up. A military investigation found. It also found inconsistent or incorrect protocols on how and when to treat possible rabies exposure and faulty medical reporting and recordkeeping.

Shumaker died in a hospital in Syracuse, N.Y., in August 2011, two weeks after his first symptoms appeared while he was on the plane from Germany to his new assignment at Fort Drum, N.Y.

"It really shook a lot of us in the preventive medicine community," said Mease, who arrived at the MEDDAC in 2015. "Systems were put in place to prevent that sort of thing from happening again."

But the new study also found lapses. Some troops who should have received the preventive treatment did not.

On the Egypt bases, approved and vaccinated "mascot" dogs were mixed on base with a larger population of unvaccinated dogs that people assumed were vaccinated.

"Only through retrospective discussion with veterinary staff in Egypt was it discovered that most animals on base were unprotected from rabies," the report said.

Veterinarians got photos of the 14 Egyptian mascot dogs and used them in a sort of photo line-up asking formerly Egypt-deployed troops who'd been bitten whether any of those dogs had been the perpetrators. If so, there was little or no risk of rabies.

But if a dog with an unknown vaccination status was involved, or a fox or a bat, prophylaxis and follow-up efforts were initiated.

Exposures from foxes in forested German training areas also increased in 2016 over previous years, the study found. Germany is considered rabies-free for terrestrial mammals after decades of orally vaccinating foxes.

But the exposures were deemed appropriate for treatment "because of close proximity of the training areas to the border of the Czech Republic where rabies is present in bats," the report said.

Treatment involves a dose of human rabies immune globulin followed by several injections of vaccine spaced weeks apart. It is always effective in preventing the disease if administered before symptoms appear, usually between two weeks and three months after exposure, experts say.

Military anti-rabies efforts consistently emphasize general orders against interacting with stray animals. But shorter, more frequent

deployments to a broad range of places makes the potential for rabies exposure more variable and difficult to predict, Mease said.

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# PACIFIC

# STEM-focused products now at Misawa's library

By SETH ROBSON  
Stars and Stripes

MISAWA AIR BASE, Japan — Virtual reality goggles, 3D printers, robots, tablet computers and electrical engineering kits are common sights at on-base libraries these days.

But checking out books, it seems, is out of fashion in a world where information is available to anyone at the swipe of a smartphone screen.

Book lending at Misawa, home of the 35th Fighter Wing in northern Japan, is a fraction of what it was when library director Asako Tuttle, 43, started working there 15 years ago.

"Worldwide, libraries are shifting from being just a big bookshelf to providing a space for people to gather and study," she said.

Makerspace, an annex that opened Nov. 13 at Misawa's Overseas Memorial Library, includes \$20,000 worth of new gear related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM.

Library staff have already been using a MakerBot Replicator there to print 3D plastic figurines of dragons and cats from the internet. Tuttle said a volunteer will start free classes next month showing people how to make their own 3D designs.

For now, library visitors will be able to use the printer only during the classes, although staff have been printing things for customers since May, Tuttle said.

STEM equipment at libraries could be a force multiplier as troops begin to utilize new high-tech gear in the field. There have been several recent examples of servicemembers using 3D printers to make or modify military equipment. At Yokota Air Base in Tokyo, for example, some airmen recently printed a part that allowed them to plug a standard gas mask into an aircraft's oxygen system.

In addition to the 3D printer there are electrical engineering and programming kits at Misawa's library that allow people to



Misawa Air Base library director Asako Tuttle tries out an Oculus Rift virtual reality headset at Makerspace, a new facility at the home of the 35th Fighter Wing.

build devices such as an electric model car and an alarm, Tuttle said.

There's also a small robot, known as KIBO, that library visitors can experiment with, she said.

The most popular pieces of new technology in the library are related to video game consoles and televisions that draw teenagers after school, Tuttle said. Some of the games can be played on Oculus Rift virtual reality headsets



PHOTOS BY SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

Makerspace, a library annex that opened Nov. 13 at Misawa Air Base, Japan, includes \$12,000 worth of gear related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

attached to desktop computers.

Tuttle, who doesn't often play video games, tried out virtual reality rock climbing using the Oculus Rift.

"I fell many times," she said.

There's also a large collection of Legos and STEM-focused K'NEX products at the library.

"Other Air Force libraries are getting these STEM items," Tuttle said.

Makerspace is for people of all ages. However, using some of the new gear is not as simple as cracking open the box, reading some instructions and getting

down to business.

"Some STEM materials are pretty simple to use but ... [others] need a teacher," she said.

The library is running a STEM program every other Thursday in which volunteers come to show people how to use the equipment.

Book lending is also getting a high-tech makeover.

Launchpad, a tablet with pre-loaded books and educational games, is one of the most popular items checked out of the library these days, Tuttle said.

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# WAR ON TERRORISM

## Identified: Special operations troops suffer deadly week

### FROM FRONT PAGE

"They had their whole life ahead of them," Dawna Duez, Elchin's mother, said Wednesday, fighting back tears in a phone interview from her home in Pennsylvania.

Her son, a 25-year-old combat controller assigned to the 26th Special Tactics Squadron at Cannon Air Force Base, N.M., was one of three American servicemembers killed Tuesday in a roadside bomb blast that struck a convoy of U.S. and Afghan forces en route to battle Taliban fighters in southeastern Afghanistan.

Green Berets Capt. Andrew Patrick Ross, 29, a newlywed from Lexington, Va., and Sgt. 1st Class Eric Michael Emond, 39, a married father of three young girls from Brush Prairie, Wash., also died after being wounded in the attack in Ghazni province, about 100 miles south of Kabul. Both were assigned to 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), at Fort Bragg, N.C.

Three more troops and a contractor were wounded in the attack, which was the deadliest this year for Americans. The wounded were evacuated but were being treated, officials said.

Ross had served more than seven years in the Army and was on his second tour, said Lt. Col. Loren Bymer, Army Special Operations Command spokesman. He was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal and the Combat Infantry Badge.

James Hasson, an Afghanistan veteran and lawyer, prepared for Ranger school with Ross and went through the grueling course in the same company with him, he said on Twitter.

"He was born to be a soldier and motivated the rest of us when we wanted to quit," Hasson wrote.

Ross' wife, Felicia, called him "the most perfect man, love of my life" in a Facebook post.

"You made me the happiest woman in the world and I'm so glad to have known you," she



**Army Capt.  
Andrew Patrick Ross**

wrote. Later she posted a video of their February 2018 wedding. "Looking back on the most perfect day on some really tough ones!"

### Soldier who helped vets

Emond, a Boston native, had served more than two decades in the Army and Marine Corps and was on his seventh overseas tour when he died. He was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart and Meritorious Service Medal.

Emond was remembered by friends as lighthearted, smart and tough with a strong desire to help others.

He had helped found the Massachusetts Fallen Heroes, which supports veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan and Gold Star Families from his home state.

"He was the bedrock of the organization," Dan Magoon, the foundation's executive director and an Army veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan, told WCVB news in Boston.

The nonprofit raised funds to build the Beacon of Honor, a memorial in Boston's Seaport Community recognizing the sacrifice of the state's servicemembers who have died in America's wars since 2001. Glass panels list the names of 272 fallen troops in chronologi-



**Army Sgt. 1st Class  
Eric Michael Emond**

cal order of their deaths.

Both Ross and Emond were invaluable leaders, Col. Nathan Prussian, 3rd Group commander, said in a prepared statement.

### An elite airman

Elchin, who was on his first deployment, was the first airman killed in the country this year. His awards and decorations include a Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal with Valor, Air Force Commendation Medal and Air Force Combat Action Medal.

"He's the whole family's hero," said his brother, Aaron. "He was the strongest man I've ever known, not just physically, but mentally."

"And the part that hurts me the most is that I'll never know what he could have become."

The Taliban quickly claimed credit for the deadly attack, saying it was targeted at the foreign invaders. The group has waged a 17-year insurgency and, despite a short-lived holiday cease-fire last summer, continues to mount attacks while U.S. and Afghan officials have stepped up efforts to negotiate peace.

Relatively few of the 15,000 American troops in Afghanistan



**Air Force Staff Sgt.  
Dylan Elchin**

go into combat or serve near the front lines, but special operations troops are among those who regularly accompany their Afghan counterparts into battle.

The Special Operations Warrior Foundation estimates special operations forces and their support personnel make up about 5 percent of the military but half of the casualties, including those who die or are wounded in training and line-of-duty incidents. Last year, the charity began supporting 90 children of fallen troops, the most since their founding in 1980, said Aly Olson, the organization's business relations manager.

This week has especially hard for elite units, with four U.S. special operations troops killed in as many days. On Saturday, Sgt. Leandro Jasso, a member of the 75th Ranger Regiment, was shot accidentally while battling to clear al-Qaida fighters from barricaded positions during an assault in the southern province of Nimroz.

The latest deaths bring the number of Americans killed in Afghanistan this year to 13 — seven from special operations. Rangers and Green Berets accounted for five of 11 U.S. combat fatalities in 2017, and special operations soldiers constituted half of that year's four noncombat deaths.

As a combat controller, Elchin was among the Air Force's elite, trained in air traffic control, parachuting, diving and rappelling, so he could work with Army Special Forces teams to direct guided munitions, strafe fires and other air-to-ground weaponry. Less than 25 percent of airmen who take the rigorous training complete the two-year pipeline.

Elchin had wanted to join the Air Force from a young age and enlisted as a special tactics combat controller on Aug. 7, 2012, shortly after graduating from Hopewell High School in Pennsylvania. While he faced setbacks during his training, he pushed his way through, his brother recalled.

"When he did his first parachute jump, he broke his foot," Aaron Elchin said. "He rehabilitated himself, went back, redid the course and continued and finished it. He was determined he was going to do it."

But Elchin's mother said she didn't want him to deploy to Afghanistan, she said.

"I was so afraid, but he said, 'Mom, I'll be OK, I'll be fine. I'll be back in January,'" she recalled. "We were getting so close to him coming back."

Elchin's death marks the first in combat for an airman in Afghanistan since 2015. Seven airmen died from enemy attacks that year, including two special tactics airmen who were killed in an insider attack in Helmand province, and eight died in aircraft crashes.

Last week, Elchin's mother reached out to let him know how much she admired him.

"I just sent him a text sometime last week and I told him, 'You're just awesome,'" she recalled. "He just amazed me. He's my hero. My son is my hero."

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## Attack: Taliban quickly claim responsibility

### FROM FRONT PAGE

"Our thoughts at this difficult time are with the loved ones of those who have died and been injured, and our brave team in Afghanistan who have lost colleagues and friends," Burbridge said in a statement.

The attack started with a suicide bomber who rammed his explosive-packed truck into the gate of the G4S compound in eastern Kabul on Wednesday evening, followed by an hours-long gunbattle with the compound's armed, with grenades and automatic rifles who stormed the compound building.

The Taliban, who claimed responsibility for the attack, said it was in retaliation for a U.S. airstrike in southern Helmand province hours earlier that killed 30 people, many of them civilians.

Afghan officials revised the initial number of 10 reported killed in the Kabul assault to six. The

Public Health Ministry spokesman, Wahid Majrooh, said four attackers had also died, leading to the confusion, but he did not identify any of the casualties.

The suicide blast left a giant crater in its wake and blew out windows in nearby buildings.

Jan Agha, a police officer at the site of the explosion Thursday, recalled the gunbattle that lasted into the night as ambulances ferried the victims to hospitals amid the chaos.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said the insurgents had killed 10 foreigners, but the Taliban often exaggerate their claims. All the attackers died in the assault.

After the attack in Helmand, a local official, Attahullah Afghan, said most of the civilian casualties there — which included men, women and children — came when an airstrike struck a house

in the central Helmand River valley, a Taliban stronghold.

U.S. officials said it happened in Helmand's Garmisr district. Sgt. 1st Class Debra Richardson, U.S. military spokeswoman in Kabul, said the airstrike was called in by Afghan special security forces who were conducting an operation with the assistance of U.S. advisers.

"At the time of the strike, the ground force was unaware of any civilians in or around the compound; they only knew that the Taliban was using the building as a fighting position," she said in an email.

A statement from the governor's office in Helmand confirmed that 16 Taliban were killed. It said an investigation was underway to determine the number of civilian casualties.

The statement also said the militants had stockpiled ammu-



RAHMAH GUL/AP

**Journalists and security forces stand next to a crater caused by a suicide bomb attack in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Thursday.**

nition in the area of the operation, which could have caused civilian casualties. There was also a car packed with explosives that ignited during the strike, the statement added.

The attacks were the latest in

a series of brutal and near-daily Taliban assaults throughout the country. The Taliban view the U.S.-backed government in Kabul as a dysfunctional Western puppet and have refused repeated offers to negotiate with it.

## MILITARY

# Lack of civilian doctors causes problems

By WILL MORRIS  
Stars and Stripes

Staff shortages at military hospitals have forced some to discontinue services, refer patients to private providers and send others to Veterans Affairs hospitals for treatment, a government watchdog has found.

In some cases, the lack of civilian personnel could threaten the accreditation of hospital programs.

One unnamed hospital was unable to meet "minimum staffing standards for labor and delivery" and officials had to refer patients to Tricare, the military's insurance network for private care, a

Government Accountability Office review of the military health care system found.

Other shortages put laboratory services at risk at the same hospital and the accreditation of a hematology-oncology program at risk at another unnamed hospital, said the GAO report, released Tuesday.

The Senate had asked for a review of the military medical workforce mix in a report with last year's defense budget, citing a Pentagon estimate that an inefficient medical workforce mix would cost the department \$3 billion over five years. It also cited a Defense Department-sponsored study that found taxpayer cost

for military medical personnel "far exceeds the cost of civilian healthcare providers with comparable skills."

The GAO found "a number of challenges, including lengthy hiring and contracting processes and federal civilian hiring freezes (that) affect DOD's ability to use federal civilians and contractors."

As a result of those shortages, uniformed personnel are increasingly picking up the slack.

"Senior officials from one Air Force [facility] noted that morale of its military staff is negatively affected by extra hours and additional responsibilities placed on them to ensure continued opera-

tions," the study found.

Active-duty and reserve military personnel form the bulk of the workforce at hospitals and clinics, but government employees and contractors account for an average of 22 percent of the staff.

The GAO report called on the DOD to develop a total workforce plan for the Defense Health Agency to ensure an appropriate mix of uniformed civilian workers. It also said the Pentagon needs to determine the full cost of continuing to use active-duty and reserve component medical personnel, and it recommended that the DOD look at the ways federal civilians and contractors are being used to provide operational

medical care — a role usually reserved for uniformed personnel.

In a draft edition of the report, the DOD concurred with the recommendations.

The GAO study reviewed the following facilities: Brooke Army Medical Center at Joint Base San Antonio, Texas; Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center at Fort Hood, Texas; Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Va.; Naval Hospital Twenty-nine Palms, Calif.; David Grant Medical Center at Travis Air Force Base, Calif.; and Air Force Hospital Langley in Hampton, Va.

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## US Navy hospital ship treats Venezuelan migrants in Colombia

By FERNANDO VERGARA  
AND MARKO ALVAREZ  
Associated Press

RIOHACHA, Colombia — Venezuelan migrants aboard a U.S. Navy hospital ship were undergoing surgery Tuesday for everything from tooth extractions to hernias that have proven difficult to treat both in the country they fled and the one receiving them.

The USNS Comfort is docked off Colombia's coast near Venezuela and taking aboard hundreds of both Venezuelan and Colombian patients during its four-day mission to a region that has been an epicenter for migration in recent years.

The trip to Riohacha is part of a larger 11-week tour to several Latin American countries heavily affected by the exodus of Venezuelans, many of whom are driven to flee by lack of access to medicine and treatment in their home country.

Niurka Roldan said she left Venezuela with several decaying teeth and a jaw abnormality that she wasn't able to treat. During her two years in Colombia, she said she's struggled to make ends meet, let alone afford dental care.

"It was very frustrating not to be able to do this in my country, nor in Colombia," she said.

The Navy is taking patients needing surgery aboard the ship while also operating two concurrent land medical sites for minor conditions. In the first day of service Monday, physicians tended to more than 700 patients and completed 39 surgeries.

Capt. Kevin Buckley said dental surgeries and operations to remove cataracts and hernias are among the most common procedures being performed — ailments that are relatively simple to fix and can have a big impact on quality of life.

"I feel like I'm a father watching my kid ride a bike for the first time," he said of the joy of watching patients see and live without pain again.

The ship's arrival comes at a tense time for U.S.-Venezuela

relations, as President Nicolas Maduro's government becomes increasingly isolated amid mounting financial sanctions and international outcry over human rights violations.

Socialist party leader Diosdado Cabello has likened the U.S. ship to a "Trojan horse" designed to generate fear among the Venezuelan population.

Venezuela's government allowed a Chinese hospital ship to visit the country in September but generally denies that a humanitarian crisis is underway. Nonetheless, the United Nations' International Children's Emergency Fund announced Monday that since August it has delivered 130 tons of medicines, health and nutrition supplies for 350,000 women and children. The U.N. said the supplies were delivered in agreement with the government.

The U.N. estimates some 3 million Venezuelans have fled their country in recent years in an exodus that is putting stress on regional governments.

Between 2017 and 2018, the number of emergency room visits by Venezuelans in Colombia has increased 202 percent, according to officials. The vast majority have no medical insurance and must go through a lengthy process to qualify for treatment of chronic conditions.

Not all Venezuelans who flee are able to get treatment in time.

According to Colombia's National Institute of Health, more than 2,000 Venezuelans have died thus far in 2018 from illnesses including malnutrition, malaria and transmittable diseases, among others — up from 863 such deaths in all of the previous year.

Roldan, who has a degree in education but now earns a living offering manicures, said she'd learned about the USNS Comfort years before on the Discovery Channel, never thinking she'd one day be among the patients.

"I saw that ship in Africa," she said. "Thank God I have this opportunity."



PHOTOS BY FERNANDO VERGARA/AP

Venezuelan migrant Niurka Roldan is prepped for surgery aboard the hospital ship USNS Comfort in Riohacha, Colombia, on Tuesday.



Saray Barrios, left, and Elvis Trazadania, both of Venezuela, receive free dental treatment in Riohacha, Colombia, on Monday.





## MILITARY

# Pentagon says Turkey's F-35 role is at risk

By TONY CAPACCIO

Bloomberg

Turkey risks expulsion from the U.S.-led F-35 program, the world's costliest weapons project, if its government takes delivery of an advanced Russian anti-aircraft system, according to an unclassified summary of a Pentagon report sent to Congress.

Although Turkey "has been an important program partner" investing more than \$1.25 billion in the stealthy F-35 jet since its development phase began in 2002, "the administration will reassess Turkey's continued participation as one of the eight partner nations should they continue their purchase of the S-400," according to the two-page summary of a classified report prepared for lawmakers.

"The Turkish government has repeatedly and publicly stated that it has concluded an agreement to procure the S-400" with initial delivery "as early as" July 2019, according to the report seen by Bloomberg News.

In addition to Turkey buying the F-35 built by Lockheed Martin Corp., 10 Turkish companies have been sent to produce about \$12 billion in parts, including key components such as the center fuselage and some landing gear. For certain items, like the cockpit display, Turkey is the sole source.

"Turkish industry manufactures aircraft parts for all F-35 variants and customers," the Defense Department said.

A longer classified report examining U.S.-Turkish relations, including the F-35, was required in this year's defense policy bill at the insistence of Sens. Thom Tillis, a North Carolina Republican, and Jean Shaheen, a New Hampshire Democrat. The legislation directed that no F-35 deliveries be made to Turkey until the report was delivered, which it was earlier this month.

Turkey, which the report calls

"a critical NATO ally," remains about two years from receiving its first F-35s. It has already authorized purchase of 30 of a planned 100 fighters.

The Russian S-400 was designed to shoot down U.S. and coalition aircraft at greater ranges and altitudes than older systems. U.S. officials are concerned that sensitive F-35 technology designed to evade such a system could be compromised and used to improve the Russian air defense system if Turkey takes possession of both systems.

Speaking to reporters in Washington this month, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said his country had wanted to buy U.S.-made Patriot missiles but was never able to get a commitment from Washington. He said there was no going back on the S-400 deal but left the door open to buying U.S. hardware in the future.

"The current deal is a done deal — I cannot cancel it," Cavusoglu said. "But I need more. I prefer to buy from my allies."

As the U.S. tries to dissuade Turkey from plans to buy the S-400, the administration "has developed an alternative package to provide Turkey with a strong, capable," NATO-compatible air and missile defense system that requires congressional support, according to the summary. The Pentagon said that's "essential to provide a real alternative that would encourage Turkey to walk away from a damaging S-400 acquisition," it said.

Shaheen said in a statement that she was "pleased by the timeliness and comprehensive nature" of the Pentagon's full, classified report, but she urged the Defense Department to "share this information with the American people."

"Limiting the availability of this report to a select group was not the intent of the law that Senator Tillis and I wrote," she said.



RAHBAR EMAMDADI, MEHR NEWS AGENCY/AP

Members of Iran's navy stand on the Ghadir-942 mini submarine in the southern port of Bandar Abbas, Iran, on Thursday. It is one of two new mini submarines acquired by the navy.

## Iran adds 2 mini subs to fleet

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran's navy has acquired two new mini submarines designed for operations in shallow waters such as the Persian Gulf, Iranian state TV reported Thursday.

The report said one of the mini submarines — also known as midget submarines — was dubbed Ghadir-955 and was built in 18 months. The other, a previously built Ghadir-942, took 10 months to overhaul.

The subs have sonar-evading technology and can launch missiles from underwater as well as fire torpedoes and drop marine mines, the TV said. Iran began

manufacturing Ghadir subs in 2005. The first was unveiled in 2007 and by 2012, five such submarines were incorporated into Iran's navy.

Midget submarines weigh less than 150 metric tons and are used for short missions, with no living accommodations for a crew of up to nine. The TV broadcast footage of the inauguration of one of the submarine in southern port of Bandar Abbas, at the mouth of the strategic Strait of Hormuz, the passageway for nearly a third of all oil traded by sea.

At the ceremony, Adm. Mojtahab Mohammadi said the sub is the 14th Iran-made vessel that joined the navy. Iran does not disclose

the total number of submarines in its fleet; however, it is believed to have some 12 light and three Russian-made submarines.

Iran, which has been developing its own tanks, armored personnel carriers, missiles and fighter planes as a part of an arms development program initiative since 1992, often boasts of new achievements or acquisitions that cannot be independently verified.

The submarines announcement is likely intended to boost Iran's military image amid rising tensions with the United States, which in November reimposed all sanctions lifted under the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers.

## Aviano identifies airman who died on base

Stars and Stripes

AVIANO AIR BASE, Italy — An airman found dead on base early Monday has been identified as Airman 1st Class Owen Little, a member of the 31st Maintenance Squadron.

Little, 21, was part of the 56th Helicopter Maintenance Unit, according to a statement from the 31st Fighter Wing and Italian Ministry of Defense. He was from Yuba City, Calif., and at his third duty station, wing officials said Thursday.

"The entire Aircraft Maintenance

Squadron mourns the loss of Airman First Class Little," Maj. Abraham Smith, acting commander of the squadron, said in the statement. "Right now, our focus is providing support to those who loved him. He was an essential member of our maintenance team and he will be dearly missed."

The cause of death is still under investigation by Italian and American authorities, according to the statement.

A memorial ceremony on base is scheduled for 9 a.m. Monday.

news@stripes.com



Little

## Sextortion: Troops duped into thinking photographs were child pornography

FROM FRONT PAGE

Posing as women on the dating and social media sites, the inmates exchanged photos with the servicemembers and then posed to be the women's father, posing she was underage. They would also pretend to be law enforcement or authority figures who would ask for money in exchange for not pressing charges, according to the NCIS news release.

"Military members would then pay, fearful they might lose their careers over possessing what they were being led to believe

was child pornography," the release stated.

Houston said NCIS "cannot speak to why the servicemembers were targeted." The ring extorted more than \$550,000 from 442 servicemembers across the U.S. in the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps, according to the news release.

"This despicable targeting of our brave servicemembers will never be tolerated," Director Andrew Traver of Naval Criminal Investigative Service said in a prepared statement. "We will not allow criminal networks to degrade the readiness of our

military force."

More than 250 other people are also being investigated for involvement in the ring and could face charges.

"With nothing more than smartphones and a few keystrokes, South Carolina inmates along with outside accomplices victimized hundreds of people," Daniel Andrews, director of the Computer Crime Investigative Unit of the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command, said in a prepared statement.

Col. Kirk B. Stabler, of the Air Force Of-

fice of Special Investigations, said, "Sexual extortion is a global crime that evolves as quickly as social media technology, if not faster."

Servicemembers who believe they are being targeted by sextortion or see suspicious activity online are asked to contact their local Naval Criminal Investigative Service, Army Criminal Investigation Command or Air Force Office of Special Investigations office.

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## MILITARY

# Border mission expected to be extended

By MISSY RYAN, JOSH DAWSEY  
AND NICK MIROFF  
The Washington Post

The Trump administration is expected to extend the military mission along the U.S. border with Mexico, a White House official said Wednesday, likely keeping troops away from their normal posts through the holidays.

The official, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss plans that have not yet been announced, said the assignment was expected to last at least 45 days beyond its scheduled end date of Dec. 15.

That decision would affect almost 6,000 active-duty military personnel now stationed in southern areas of Texas, Arizona and California, lengthening a mission that critics have described as an unnecessary ploy to galvanize anti-immigrant sentiment.

News of a possible extension, which was first reported by NPR, comes days after a dramatic confrontation at a border crossing outside San Diego.

Border Patrol and Department of Homeland Security officials this week defended authorities' use of tear gas against migrants, including women and children, who tried to rush the border fence at California's San Ysidro crossing on Sunday.

At least 5,000 migrants, many of them members of a caravan that has made its way through Mexico in recent weeks, are now waiting in Tijuana just across from San Diego to request asylum in the United States.

Previous administrations have sent National Guard troops to harden the border, but the use of large numbers of active-duty military personnel, who face legal limits to their domestic activities,

has no modern precedent. Critics have said the deployment undermines the military's ability to prepare for foreign deployments.

Even before the incident at San Ysidro, the Pentagon had suggested an extension might be in the works.

"Some of those troops certainly will be home [for the holidays]; I would anticipate they would be," Defense Secretary Jim Mattis told reporters last week. "But some troops may not be or some new troops may be assigned to new missions... This is a dynamic situation."

As of Wednesday, DHS had not asked the Pentagon to extend the timeline of its border mission, said Lt. Col. Jamie Davis, a Pentagon spokesman.

Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, asked last week about the timetable for the troop deployment, said she had spoken

to Mattis and had "no doubt" the Department of Defense would "continue to be our partners in this mission until it is resolved."

A DHS official said the chaotic scenes along the border Sunday, when U.S. agents used tear gas to drive back stone-throwing crowds of migrants breaking through the fence, had made evident the need for a troop presence.

"What we saw Sunday is a clear indication of why we need [military] support," the official said, also speaking on the condition of anonymity.

An announcement on the extension is expected as early as Friday. Last week, the White House issued an order that allows troops to use force to protect Border Patrol personnel and temporarily detain migrants.

The Pentagon has sought to tamp down speculation that troops could fire on migrants.

Military police, who are typically armed and make up some of the forces deployed to the border, will bear primary responsibility for protecting Border Patrol, but officials say they will not be armed if they are conducting crowd control activities.

"Only military police who are normally armed in their day-to-day duties will be carrying weapons, and would be involved in providing emergency backup support if [U.S. Customs and Border Protection] requires assistance," the U.S. Army North said in a statement.

Officials expect the extended mission will have a greater emphasis on protecting border personnel rather than the logistics and engineering activities, including stringing concertina wire and taking other steps to strengthen the border, that dominated troops' initial activities.

## Some question who will take care of barbed wire along border

By DAN LAMOTHE  
The Washington Post

In town after town, the scene was much the same: U.S. troops arrived in groups of a few dozen, hauled wooden pallets stacked with barbed concertina off trucks and got to work.

They welded the wire to 20-foot fences in Arizona, strung it on the sunny beaches of San Diego, and tied some to the fences in Brownsville, Texas, that separate the winding Rio Grande from parking lots for stores like Ross and Dollar General.

Now, nearly a month into the Trump administration's deployment of thousands of servicemembers to the southern border, some residents are beginning to wonder: What will happen to all of that wire?

Soldiers and Marines unfurled the razor-tipped steel coils at the request of U.S. Customs and Border Protection to "harden" ports of entry as caravans of migrants made their way north. The agency said it was concerned that large groups of migrants might rush the border at once.

But with the caravan groups choosing to travel to Tijuana, near California, officials in other states are awaiting word on whether the U.S. government will remove the wire in their jurisdictions.

"There are women and children, and they're out there putting up that sharp wire," said Judge Ramon Garcia, the chief administrative officer in Hidalgo County, Tex., which passed a resolution opposing "permanent" militarization of the border. "I don't believe that's going to stop anybody, and it sends a horrible message to our neighbors to the south."

President Donald Trump has praised the use of the wire, saying just ahead of the midterm elections that when used properly, it can be "a beautiful sight."

More than 150 miles of concertina



U.S. soldiers carry concertina wire to put up on a border fence near the Brownsville and Matamoros Express International Bridge in Brownsville, Texas, on Nov. 11

were available to be strung at the outset of the operation, said Air Force Gen. Terrence O'Shaughnessy, who has led the deployment as the chief of U.S. Northern Command.

It's unclear exactly how much of it has been used, but certainly dozens of miles. Northcom said in a tweet last week that U.S. troops had strung more than 20 miles of wire in just the previous few days.

During Defense Secretary Jim Mattis' visit to troops in South Texas, a soldier asked whether he and his colleagues would have to remove the "wire obstacles" they had put in place. Mattis, who was traveling with Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen,

wouldn't say.

"We'll see what the secretary says, OK?" Mattis responded, referring to Nielsen. "Right now, the mission is to put them in... We'll let you know."

U.S. military officials initially said they expected the mission to conclude by Dec. 15, though the possibility of an extension is now likely. Mattis told reporters Nov. 21 that the end of the deployment will be "conditions-dependent," and some of the deployed troops will be home by Christmas, depending on whether Homeland Security assigns them any more missions.

On Monday, Northcom said in a statement that it had cut the number of troops on the border mis-

sures meet civilian life. It also has raised concerns about wild-life, which can become ensnared in the wire's sharp teeth.

In Laredo, Texas, concertina was strung in Tres Laredos Park, drawing lamentations from some city officials. A Border Patrol chief, Greg Burwell, told the city council on Monday that when the wire is no longer needed, the Border Patrol will ask the U.S. military to remove it, according to the Laredo Morning Times.

Roberto Balli, a city councilman concerned about the issue, has doubts about whether that promise will be kept.

"I think our community has respected what Border Patrol does," Balli said in a phone interview. "But the issue with the wire — I think the threat appears to have ended. I think it's probably time for that wire to come down so that our community can continue as it has always been."

Asked about Burwell's comments, CBP said in a statement that it "has no plans to remove any impedimentary materials/equipment installed at and between the Ports of Entry."

That marks a difference from earlier this month, when CBP said in another statement to The Washington Post that it would reassess the need for the wire once the potential for a migrant caravan in South Texas disappeared.

The issue is complicated by the possibility for additional migrant caravans to travel to other parts of the U.S. border where the wire is now.

South Texas was selected as a good spot for additional concertina wire initially because it was a shorter journey for migrants traveling north. Other border cities, such as El Paso, are farther north and have not received similar reinforcements.

CALLA KESSLER/The Washington Post

## MILITARY

# VA announces new plan to fix GI Bill payment problems

By NIKKI WENTLING  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — At a congressional hearing earlier this month, lawmakers pleaded with Department of Veterans Affairs officials to give them a date when a severe technology problem that caused payment delays and incorrect payments to thousands of student veterans would be fixed.

On Wednesday, they gave one: Dec. 1, 2019.

The VA is scrapping its current efforts to fix the IT system and plans to contract another company to do the work. A new system will be in place by the spring 2020 semester, the agency said in a news release. The decision means further delay in implementing part of the "Forever" GI Bill — a major extension of veterans' education benefits that Congress passed in 2017.

Though it's another in a series of implementation setbacks, veterans groups and lawmakers were mostly pleased with the decision Wednesday. They were primarily concerned that an ongoing effort to fix the IT problem could lead to more payment delays and disruption for student veterans in the near term.

"I think it alleviates a lot of the uncertainty about when things are going to be ready and what people should expect," said Lauren Augustine, vice president of government affairs for Student Veterans of America. "They seem to have a plan to get this resolved, which is a step in the right direction."

Part of the new GI Bill changed calculations for veterans' housing allowances. The law now requires the allowances to be based on the zip code where students attend classes, rather than defaulting to the main campuses.

When the VA went to change its IT system this summer to account for the change, its systems failed. While it dealt with that problem, the VA was also attempting to tackle a large amount of veterans' education claims for the fall semester. What resulted was widespread delays in veterans receiving their monthly housing allowances, which they use for rent, food and other living expenses.

About 1,000 veterans experienced a hardship because of the delay and called the VA for help. Robert Worley, director of VA education services, said the agency received "very few" confirmed cases of veterans being evicted because of the problems.

VA Secretary Robert Wilkie compared the effort to recalculate housing allowances during the academic season to "flying a plane while building it."

"That was unusual and frustrating to veterans and taxpayers," he acknowledged in a statement.

The agency previously said it

would have the new housing calculation in place sometime early next year, prompting concerns about a new system going into place at the same time a rush of veterans would be submitting claims to get paid.

With its new, lagged approach, the VA committed to getting veterans paid on time in the new semester. Like it was before the new GI Bill, their housing allowances will be based on the location of their school's main campus.

Because of the IT problems this semester, the VA reverted to paying students housing allowances based on 2017 rates that didn't account for cost-of-living increases in 2018. Veterans who received less money than they should have been paid will get a retroactive payment for the amount they are owed, VA press secretary Curt Cashour said. There wasn't a clear date given when those payments would be sent.

Tanya Ang, director of policy and outreach for Veterans Education Success, said she wants to see veterans paid back quickly.

"I am encouraged by the steps [VA Undersecretary of Benefits Paul Lawrence] and his staff are taking, but expect VA to correct students' monthly housing allowance from fall 2018 well before spring 2020," Ang said in a statement.

Some veterans also received too much money this semester. The VA reiterated Wednesday that it would not ask those students to pay back the debt. The VA has not said how much total was overpaid.

When the new system is put into place in December 2019, the VA does not have plans to retroactively pay students who would have received more money had the new calculation regarding campus location been made on time. The GI Bill required the VA to have the change in place by Aug. 1, 2018.

Ang applies to veterans who attend classes at a site other than their school's main campus and should be getting a higher housing allowance based on their physical location. For example, a student attending a University of Pennsylvania campus in San Francisco will receive a Philadelphia rate for their housing allowances during the next year, when they should be receiving a San Francisco rate.

Lawrence, the VA official ultimately in charge of veterans' education claims, said Thursday that retroactively paying those students could be too much of a burden on schools and the VA. It's uncertain how many veterans are affected and how much money they will be owed.

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NOHIA TRAN/Courtesy of the U.S. Marine Corps

## Hot in the snow

U.S. Marines with Marine Rotational Force-Europe 19.1 participate in a pepper spray course in Setermoen, Norway, on Saturday. The course consists of Marines battling the effects of the spray while executing self-defense techniques and methods of detaining.

# On Russia's doorstep, NATO trains to deal with cyberthreats

By NATALIA DROZDIAK  
AND OTT UMMELAS  
Bloomberg

In a small Estonian town about 30 miles from the Russian border, NATO is playing out fictional scenarios where allied networks and civilian systems are under online assault.

A three-day annual exercise, dubbed Cyber Coalition, is pulling together officials from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and its partners in Estonia, which suffered what's widely believed to be the first state-sponsored cyberassault on another country in 2007 amid a row with Russia over relocating a Soviet-era monument.

Drawing inspiration from current events and active threats, the simulations test officials' real-time responses to incidents, including social media-fueled riots, network breaches resulting in poisoned water supplies and derailed trains and the encryption of classified files.

"It's hard to imagine a conflict in the near future that wouldn't include a cyber dimension," said Chelsea Slack, deputy head of NATO's cyberdefense unit. "So we need to be ready to address that."

About 700 officials and experts have joined NATO's biggest computer-defense exercise, which

runs through Thursday and is designed to help protect elections in the fictional developing nation of Tytan. Its neighbor, Stellaria, which is seeking regional dominance, opposes NATO's presence and is working to undermine its mission.

Holed up in the Estonian town of Tartu, officials from 28 NATO member states and other partner nations — including Finland, Ireland and Switzerland — are taking part in the exercise and coordinating remotely with colleagues in their home countries. In one scenario, malware that's embedded itself on the NATO network has accessed classified files and sent them back to Stellaria, which can now see the alliance's plans. Another envisages troll farms on social networks triggering riots where participants try to burn a ship containing uncast ballots.

The exercise in the former Soviet republic comes as regional tensions flare after Russia fired on Ukraine's navy near Crimea in a major re-escalation of hostilities. Ukraine, which is due to hold elections next year, has imposed martial law in some regions, warning it's at risk of full-scale war.

NATO officials said they weren't conducting the exercise

with a specific nation-state or aggressor in mind, to keep the game flexible and test a variety of responses from participants.

The simulation helps officials figure out what methods work and who they're meant to call in a real emergency. It also helps NATO determine which allies are strongest in which areas.

There's also another goal: to deter potential aggressors from even thinking about attacking in the first place.

"Exercises signal our preparedness, signal our readiness to respond," Slack said of Cyber Coalition, which has now been held for 11 straight years.

Cybersecurity has moved to the top of NATO's agenda in recent years. In 2014, NATO broadened the scope of its collective-defense commitment to cover cyberattacks. And in 2016, it upgraded its command structure, with cyberspace joining the traditional domains of air, land and sea.

"There are a wide array of adversaries out there that choose to use cyberspace exclusively sometimes," said U.S. Air Force Col. Don Lewis, deputy director of the NATO Cyber Operations Center. "But every engagement, it's clear, now will involve some sort of cyberspace element."



## NATION

# Cohen pleads guilty to lying to Congress

By LARRY NEUMEISTER  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Michael Cohen, President Donald Trump's former lawyer, made a surprise appearance before a federal judge in New York on Thursday and pleaded guilty to lying to Congress to cover up that he was negotiating a real estate deal in Moscow on Trump's behalf during the heat of his campaign for the Republican presidential nomination.

Trump called Cohen a "weak person" who is lying to get a lighter sentence.

The charge was brought by special counsel Robert Mueller, who is investigating Russian interference in the presidential election, and was the result of his cooperation with that probe.

Flanked by his lawyers, Cohen admitted making false statements about the project in 2017 to Senate and House intelligence committees, which at the time were investigating possible connections between the Trump campaign and Russia.

His comments made clear that his communications with Trump about the project were much more frequent than he had suggested.

Cohen, 52, wearing a blue tie and dark suit, was noticeably relaxed throughout the appearance in a packed Manhattan courtroom, unlike his irritable and emotional demeanor when he entered a guilty plea during the summer.

He said the judge he lied about the timing of the negotiations, his communications with people in the company and in Russia about the deal, and other details to be loyal to Trump and consistent with Trump's "political messaging." Cohen and prosecutors referred to Trump as "individual one" throughout



JULIE JACOBSON/AP

**Michael Cohen, President Donald Trump's former lawyer, leaves federal court on Thursday in New York, after pleading guilty to lying to Congress about his work on an effort to build a Trump Tower in Russia.**

Thursday's proceedings and said he lied "to be loyal to Individual One."

Among other lies, Cohen said he told Congress that all discussions about building a Trump Tower in Moscow had ended by January 2016, when they had actually continued until June of that year.

He said he also lied about his contacts with Russian officials and lied when he said he never agreed to travel to Russia in connection with the project and never discussed with Trump plans to travel to Moscow to support the project.

Prosecutors said in a court document that Cohen had misled

Congress to give a false impression that the Moscow project had ended before the Iowa caucus and first Republican presidential primary in 2016.

As he left the White House shortly after the court proceeding concluded, Trump called Cohen "a weak person."

"Michael Cohen is lying and he's trying to get a reduced sentence," Trump said.

Nothing said in court, or in associated court filings, addressed whether Trump or his aides had directed Cohen to mislead Congress.

The charges were handled by Mueller's team, not the federal prosecutors in New York who

handled Cohen's previous guilty plea in August to other federal charges involving his taxi businesses, bank fraud and his campaign work for Trump. Cohen is scheduled to be sentenced Dec. 12.

Cohen declined to comment as he left the courtroom.

Cohen's lawyer, Guy Petrillo, noted that a letter from federal prosecutors showed that Cohen's cooperation with Mueller will be described to Cohen's sentencing judge. However, the letter makes clear that Cohen is not receiving the kind of "SK1.1" letter written on behalf of formal government cooperators.

**Trump: Manafort pardon is not 'off the table'**

WASHINGTON — A pardon for Paul Manafort is "not off the table," President Donald Trump said, drawing swift rebuke from critics who fear the president will use his executive power to protect friends and supporters caught up in the Russia probe.

The president's discussion of a possible pardon in an interview Wednesday with the New York Post came days after special counsel Robert Mueller said Manafort had breached his plea deal by repeatedly lying to investigators. The former Trump campaign chairman denies that he lied.

Trump's remarks are the latest sign of his disdain for the Russia investigation, which has dogged him for two years and ensnared members of his inner circle. In recent weeks, the president, armed with inside information provided to his lawyers by Manafort's legal team, has sharpened his attacks, seizing on what he claims are dirty tactics employed by Mueller and accusing investigators of pressuring witnesses to lie.

When asked about a pardon for Manafort, Trump told the newspaper: "It was never discussed, but I wouldn't take it off the table. Why would I take it off the table?"

On Wednesday, the top Democrat on the Senate intelligence committee said that if Trump pardons Manafort, it would be a "blatant and unacceptable abuse of power." Sen. Mark Warner, of Virginia, said in a tweet that the president's pardon power is not a "personal tool" that Trump can use to protect "himself and his friends."

From The Associated Press

## McConnell's year-end wish: Getting Congress to legalize hemp

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Pressed for time and pushed to move quickly on a border wall and criminal justice reform, the Senate's top leader has his own priority in Congress' lame-duck session: passing a farm bill that includes a full pardon for hemp, the non-intoxicating cousin of marijuana that's making a comeback in his home state.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has guaranteed his proposal to make hemp a legal agricultural commodity, removing it from the federal list of controlled substances, will be part of the final farm bill, a crucial measure for rural America and Kentucky, where the Republican faces reelection in 2020. He places it on a par with federal spending bills as action Congress must take before the end of the year.

Keeping that promise would cap a decadeslong journey to overcome the stigma associated with the crop, which McConnell himself did not initially embrace



AP

**Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, left, inspects hemp taken from a bale at a processing plant in Louisville, Ky., in July.**

wholeheartedly. But in recent years, the quintessential establishment Republican has been all in for the hemp revolution.

McConnell put himself on the conference committee assigned

to negotiate a compromise farm bill. Work requirements for food stamps, known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, have been the biggest stumbling block holding up an agreement.

Kentucky has emerged as a leader in developing a hemp industry and as a place where legalizing the crop went from a fringe issue to a mainstream cause. Fellow Kentucky Republican Sen. Rand Paul and Republican Reps. Thomas Massie and James Comer are strong supporters, too. But it's McConnell's backing that has put the long-banned crop on the verge of winning a full pardon.

"We are very fortunate to have Sen. McConnell as our top advocate in Congress," said Eric Steinstra, president of the hemp advocacy group Vote Hemp.

Comer, a leading hemp proponent since his days as Kentucky's agriculture commissioner, likes the provision's chances this year.

"It's going to happen," he said. Hemp is deeply rooted in Kentucky dating back to pioneer days. But growing hemp without a federal permit was banned decades ago because of its classification as a controlled substance related to marijuana. Hemp and marijuana are the same species, but hemp has a negligible amount of THC,

the psychoactive compound that gives marijuana users a high.

The crop was historically used for rope but has many other uses, including clothing and mulch from the fiber; hemp milk and cooking oil from the seeds; and soap and lotions. Other uses include building materials, animal bedding and biofuels. Hemp-derived cannabidiol, or CBD oil, as a health product has become an increasingly large market.

Hemp's comeback started with the 2014 federal farm bill. McConnell helped push for a provision allowing states to pursue hemp research and development. That allowed the crop to be grown on an experimental basis.

"They (hemp proponents) did a nice job of figuring out how to explain the marketplace for this to make this seem like something other than a pie-in-the-sky, fringe idea," said Scott Jennings, a Kentucky-based Republican consultant with close ties to McConnell.

"And McConnell listened and found his way to supporting them because they made a good case."

## NATION

# Dartmouth's handling of allegations scrutinized

By MICHAEL CASEY

Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. — Dartmouth College alumni have heard the allegations of misconduct in one department where professors are accused of hosting drunken parties, groping and harassing their students and, in two cases, sexually assaulting them.

Now, a growing number of former students are demanding answers from the administration and questioning how such an atmosphere apparently flourished for at least 15 years at the Ivy League school in Hanover, New Hampshire.

Gathering in Facebook groups and other networks, alumni led by several women are pushing for withholding donations until they see changes at the school — or the ouster of President Philip Hanlon. Others want department chairs and other administrators responsible for handling the sexual misconduct allegations held accountable.

In October 2017, Dartmouth launched an investigation into the three professors. It never released the findings. But Todd Heatherton retired this summer after being told he would be fired and denied tenure. Paul Whalen and William Kelley resigned soon thereafter.

The growing anger comes in the wake of a federal lawsuit filed this month by seven female graduate and undergraduate students who were in the Department of Psychological and Brain Science, where the professors worked. They accused the three of sexual misconduct and said the college ignored their complaints.

"There is a whole of lot of alums, women in particular, out there who have had experiences that are similar enough to what these students have experienced and are horrified to know this is still going on,"



MARY ALTAFIER/AP

**Annemarie Brown, from left back row, Andrea Courtney, and Marissa Evansin, and from left front row, Sasha Brietzke, Vassiki Chauhan, Kristina Rapuanu, pose in New York. The women filed a lawsuit against Dartmouth College for allegedly allowing three professors to create a culture in their department that encouraged drunken parties and subjected female graduate students to harassment, groping and sexual assault.**

said Giavanna Munafò, a lecturer in the Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies program who has counseled two of the seven women who made abuse claims.

"It's like a wake-up call to them," she said. "Our college is still as bad as it was or worse."

Contact information for Whalen and Kelley has not been available, and it is unclear whether they have attorneys to speak for them. Heatherton apologized for acting inappropriately at conferences but said, through a lawyer, that he never socialized

or had sexual relations with students.

Archana Ramanujam, who attended Dartmouth from 2010 to 2014 and worked with a woman who alleges abuse by one of the professors, said she is putting together a letter to the administration with dozens of alumni and current students demanding greater transparency and accountability in the way the school handles sexual abuse claims.

The letter may include threats of withholding donations, she said, if change doesn't happen.

"Getting survivors' stories out there and holding perpetrators responsible is the most important thing. This issue keeps being swept under the rug, and the lawsuit no longer allows that," Ramanujam said in an email.

Most upsetting for some alumni is how the women were treated by the administration when they complained about abuse.

Prior to the investigation in 2017, the lawsuit alleges that more than two dozen women reported the harassment and sexual assault to the college's Title IX office. Several who filed complaints said in the lawsuit that they were denied teaching opportunities in the department, reassigned to an unsuitable lab or given a failing grade on an honors thesis.

Some complained they were forced to work with the professors for several months, despite their claims of abuse.

"Dartmouth took the fact that the predators might sue the school and the fact that they might lose money and reputation into account," said Vassiki Chauhan, a plaintiff who is still at Dartmouth and alleges that she was raped by Whalen at his home.

"They didn't take into account the cost to the victims. They are still not taking that into account. In that respect, Dartmouth is failing," she said. "Dartmouth needs to be held accountable."

The AP does not typically identify people who say they are victims of sexual assault unless they grant permission, as Chauhan and five plaintiffs in this case have done.

In response to the lawsuit, Hanlon praised the women for coming forward but denied allegations that Dartmouth ignored their complaints.

Hanlon reiterated "that sexual misconduct and harassment have no place at Dartmouth."

## Little Rock could elect first black mayor

By ANDREW DEMILLO

Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Six decades after nine black students were escorted past an angry white mob into Little Rock Central High School, the city at the center of the desegregation crisis may be on the verge of electing its first African-American mayor.

But Frank Scott, the 35-year-old banking executive who may break that barrier, says it's not his motivation for running to lead his hometown.

"I'm not running to be the black mayor of Little Rock," Scott said.

Scott could win by bridging some of the biggest rifts in Arkansas' capital: race, income and geography. He's a native of one of Little Rock's poorer areas who has risen in its more affluent part in professions — politics and finance — dominated by white men.

Race is hard to escape in the campaign for mayor in Arkansas' capital, where divisions linger long after the school's 1957 desegregation. The city's police department has faced questions about its tactics, including the department's use of no-knock warrants. The predominantly black Little Rock School District has been under state control for the past three years, and community leaders have compared the takeover to Gov. Orval Faubus' efforts to block integration.

Black leaders in the city view the Dec. 4 runoff as a chance for Little Rock to address some of its biggest divisions.

"Race is a major dividing line in this city. That's one, but the other major line in this city is economics," said Joyce Elliott, a Democratic state senator from Little Rock who's backing Scott's bid.

"Those two things have been lethal for this city, and we are not doing a good job of having a conversation or a plan that involve all of us that we carry out."

If Scott is elected, he'd be the highest-profile black official in a state that hasn't elected an African-American to Congress or statewide office since Reconstruction. Blacks make up about 42 percent of the city's population, compared to nearly 16 percent statewide.

Little Rock has had two black mayors, but they were elected city directors chosen for the job by fellow board members and not by voters. Scott won a plurality of votes in a five-man race in November with 37 percent of the vote, a few percentage points shy of the 40 percent needed to win the office outright.

He's running against Baker Kurrus, a 64-year-old white attorney and businessman who was appointed as the school district's superintendent after the state takeover. Kurrus' contract as superintendent wasn't renewed after he opposed the expansion of charter schools in the district, a move that rallied Democratic lawmakers and community leaders to his defense.

In a debate this week with Scott, Kurrus noted that his mother was a member of a committee that fought for the re-opening of Little Rock's schools after Faubus closed them to prevent further desegregation following Central High's.

Both candidates are running on the promise of change as they seek the open, nonpartisan seat.

Like Scott, Kurrus says unifying the city is one of his top goals as mayor. He says his experience, including his time as a school board member, shows he can do it.



Scott



Kurrus

## Mississippi county ruled liable for jailing woman

Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. — There are two remaining questions left for a Mississippi woman who sued over being jailed 96 days without seeing a judge: Will the U.S. Supreme Court get involved, and not, how much will she get paid?

U.S. District Judge Sharon Aycock on Tuesday ruled that Choctaw County and Sheriff Cloyd Halford are liable for violating Jessica Jauch's constitutional rights. She set a March jury trial to determine damages. However, the county and Halford are asking the U.S. Supreme Court to take up the case. If the high court refuses to hear the appeal, as happens in most cases, the county will be out of legal options.

Jauch, now 36, was arrested on traffic charges in 2012 and held after being served with a drug indictment. While in jail, she says she was forced to temporarily sign over her daughter's custody rights to her mother. After finally seeing a judge, she was appointed a public defender and quickly made bail. She was eventually cleared of the drug charge after undercover video didn't show her committing a crime.

In Choctaw County, like many rural Mississippi counties, circuit court only meets twice a year,

and the next meeting was months away. The sheriff said he didn't have to take Jauch before a judge until court met because she'd already been indicted on a felony drug charge, thus establishing probable cause for her detention.

Aycock originally agreed with that argument, dismissing Jauch's



Jauch

case in 2016. But the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeal was sharply critical of Aycock's ruling, reinstating Jauch's case in 2017 and calling her detention "unjust and unfair" and "alien to our law."

"Heaping these consequences on an accused and blithely waiting months before affording the defendant access to the justice system is patently unfair in a society where guilt is not presumed," Circuit Judge Thomas Reavley wrote in 2017.

The county asked the full 5th Circuit to rehear the case, but the court refused on a 9-6 vote. The judges who wanted to hear the case said the illegal detention was the fault of state court judges.

## NATION

## Drones: Delightful fireworks alternative?

By ERIC D. LAWRENCE  
Detroit Free Press

In the night sky near Interstate 75 in northern Oakland County, Mich., 60 drones moved with precision.

Their preprogrammed electric dance lit the early evening October darkness with a changing, blending palette of red, green and blue as they outlined many forms - a rotating cube, a tornado ripping a roof from a house, a pair of eyes gazing.

The 16-minute unmanned aircraft system show north of Detroit was not advertised, but it drew enough of a crowd of cars that drone operators felt compelled to shut the gate of the field managed by a Radio Control flying club known as the Holly Cloud Hoppers.

The shapes and maneuvers, accompanied by the swarm's hivelike buzz, were not designed to entertain on this night but rather to allow a Michigan company, Firefly Drone Shows, to try out new ideas, some of which may be used for an upcoming performance.

Ryan Sigmon, who owns Firefly with Kyle Dorosz, compared the LED light display to something seen on a computer screen.

"Just think of them as pixels. Every drone has a very specific place to be at a specific time," he said.

But try not thinking of them as drones, Sigmon said. Instead, think of how an artist would see them.

"Look at it like, I've got a bunch of dots in the sky, what can I do to it? That's when the real magic starts to happen there," Sigmon said.

That magic is what is prompting interest in the kinds of drone shows Firefly and some other companies can create. Last month, Firefly produced a show for the 100th anniversary of the start of production at the Ford Rouge Plant. Drones were used to spell out "HAPPY B-DAY!" in the sky and even create vehicles, including an F-150 pickup, which appeared to drive over rocky terrain.

The kind of evening celebration that might have once been the exclusive domain of fireworks is expanding to include the increasing technological prowess of drones. Firefly, which got the necessary waivers from the Federal Aviation Administration this year to operate multiple drones at night, demonstrated a piece of the potential market this summer when Sigmon and Dorosz got a call from a resort community in Arizona.

Extremely dry conditions had forced a cancellation of the community's Fourth of July fireworks show. With only a few days' notice, Sigmon, Dorosz and crew drove west and pulled off a drone show in between their other scheduled events.

"We were able to use drones to solve an actual problem that someone was having, which was super neat and just the fact that we were able to pull it off in four days was just the cherry on top," Dorosz said.

Firefly did not provide specific price information, but Sigmon said pricing is "typically in line with a large fireworks display."

Drones have been used in a number of high-profile events in the last few years, including during the Super Bowl LII halftime show with Lady Gaga in 2017 and this year for the Winter Olympics in South Korea. The Olympics performance included more than 1,200 drones in a recorded show that created a snowboarder in action.

Intel, which is considered a pioneer in drone entertainment; Firefly; and Great Lakes Drone Co., which is based in southwest Michigan, are considered the main



MANDI WRIGHT/Detroit Free Press

operators in the lighted drone shows, but anyone hoping to develop similar nighttime shows in the U.S. could seek FAA waivers.

The FAA said it has issued 38 waivers allowing operations of multiple drones by a single pilot, and more than 1,900 waivers allowing operations at night. The three companies have both types of waivers.

The need to issue waivers to allow such operations, however, might provide a false confidence in the safety of the technology, said an expert, Ella Atkins, an aerospace engineering professor at the University of Michigan.

"The fact that it's a waiver means it's not an established process," Atkins said. "If you think about it, you're getting exceptions or waivers that really amounts to the FAA acknowledging that they don't yet have a process to carefully evaluate the safety of every drone that asks them to operate, so they instead review paperwork that is really light on the technical details."

Atkins has worked extensively with drones as a faculty adviser for Michigan's student drone team, helping to push for a netted test facility at the university and sitting on a National Academies committee related to drone research, according to the university. She is also a private pilot.

Before a fireworks display at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, Monika Nourmand of Los Angeles was hit in the face by a drone operated by Great Lakes Drone Co. owner Matt Quinn, according to a lawsuit and her attorney, who said Nourmand did not know a drone show had been planned.

Nourmand and her husband sued Quinn and his company, according to a published report and Caesars, which did not respond to a request for comment.

The collision led to an emergency room visit for Nourmand, who was treated for a range of injuries, including subretinal bleeding, cuts around her eye, a fracture of the orbital floor, blurriness and vision loss, said to Nourmand's attorney, Robert Glassman. Nourmand is now at risk of early-onset glaucoma, he said.

Glassman dismissed the idea that a waiver would shield the operators from liability.



"Even if there is a waiver to the federal regulations, you can't operate a drone that falls out of the sky and strikes someone in the face without being held accountable. I mean the waiver is not a waiver in the event that there is an injury or that there's negligence," Glassman said.

The FAA, however, said "based on the investigation, there appeared to be no violation of existing federal aviation regulations."

Quinn, the owner of Great Lakes Drone Co., declined to discuss the incident, citing the lawsuit, but said "all FAA investigations are open. I'm not too worried about anything."

Natalie Pavlatos, managing associate

Above, The Firefly Drone Shows creative team gathers in a field near Holly, Mich., to test a coming show. At left, Firefly Drone Shows' Ryan Sigmon, 28, of West Bloomfield holds one of the company's 60 proprietary drones. Below, Firefly Drone Shows' Brea Dorosz, 25, of Lake Orion, Mich., helps prepare 60 drones in a field near Holly, Mich. Firefly Drones, a company out of Lake Orion, uses multiple drones to swarm, creating incredible evening light shows. The company started this year and has already been used across the country, including a show at the Rouge Factory celebration.

of the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International, an advocacy group, said FAA regulations opened the door to commercial drone operations in 2016.

The regulations stipulate that drones must fly under 400 feet, within a visual line of site, one at a time and during the day, she said.

"However, the FAA recognized the need for this rule to be flexible and created a waiver process to allow for expanded operations on a case-by-case basis, including flights at night or multiple drones at once (both important for drone light shows)," Pavlatos said.

A waiver is also available for operators who want to fly over people.



## SCIENCE AND MEDICINE

# Suicides, overdoses reduce US life expectancy

By Mike Stobbe

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Suicides and drug overdoses pushed up U.S. deaths last year and drove a continuing decline in how long Americans are expected to live.

Overall, there were more than 2.8 million U.S. deaths in 2017, or nearly 70,000 more than the previous year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Thursday. It was the most deaths in a single year since the government began counting more than a century ago.

The increase partly reflects the nation's growing and aging population. But it's deaths in younger age groups — particularly middle-aged people — that have had the largest impact on calculations of life expectancy, experts said.

Age-adjusted death rates are a wake-up call that we are losing too many Americans, too early and too often, to conditions

that are preventable," Dr. Robert Redfield, the CDC's director, said in a statement.

The suicide death rate last year was the highest it's been in at least 50 years, according to U.S. government records. There were more than 47,000 suicides, up from a little under 45,000 the year before.

For decades, U.S. life expectancy was on the upswing, rising a few months nearly every year. Now it's trending the other way. It fell in 2015, stayed level in 2016 and declined again last year, the CDC said.

The nation is in the lowest period of a generally declining life expectancy since the late 1910s, when World War I and the worst flu pandemic in modern history combined to kill nearly 1 million Americans. Life expectancy in 1918 was 39.

In the nation's 10 leading causes of death, only the cancer death rate fell in 2017. Meanwhile, there

were increases in seven others — suicide, stroke, diabetes, Alzheimer's, flu/pneumonia, chronic lower respiratory diseases and unintentional injuries.

An underlying factor is that the death rate for heart disease — the nation's No. 1 killer — has stopped falling. In years past, declines in heart disease deaths were enough to offset increases in some other kinds of death, but no longer, said Robert Anderson, who oversees CDC death statistics.

CDC officials did not speculate about what's behind declining life expectancy, but Dr. William Dietz, a disease prevention expert at George Washington University, sees a sense of hopelessness.

Financial struggles, a widening income gap and divisive politics are all casting a pall over many Americans, he suggested. "I really do believe that people are increasingly hopeless, and that leads to drug use; it leads potentially to suicide," he said.

Drug overdose deaths also continued to climb, surpassing 70,000 last year, in the midst of the deadliest drug overdose epidemic in U.S. history. The death rate rose 10 percent from the previous year, smaller than the 21 percent jump seen between 2016 and 2017.

That's not quite cause for celebration, said Dr. John Rowe, a professor of health policy and aging at Columbia University.

"Maybe it's starting to slow down, but it hasn't turned around yet," Rowe said. "I think it will take several years."

The CDC figures are based mainly on a review of 2017 death certificates. The life expectancy figure is based on current death trends and other factors.

The agency also said:

■ A baby born last year in the U.S. is expected to live about 78 years and 7 months, on average. An American born in 2015 or 2016 was expected to live about

a month longer, and one born in 2014 about two months longer than that.

■ The suicide rate was 14 deaths per 100,000 people. That's the highest since at least 1975.

■ The percentage of suicides due to drug overdose has been inching downward.

■ Deaths from flu and pneumonia rose by about 6 percent. The 2017-18 flu season was one of the worst in more than a decade, and some of the deaths from early in that season appeared in the new death statistics.

■ Death rates for heroin, methadone and prescription opioid painkillers were flat. But deaths from the powerful painkiller fentanyl and its close opioid cousins continued to soar in 2017.

The CDC did not discuss 2017 gun deaths in the reports released Thursday. But earlier CDC reports noted increased rates of suicide by gun and by suffocation or hanging.

## ADHD diagnoses higher in younger kids

By Carla K. Johnson

Associated Press

The youngest children in kindergarten are more likely to be diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in early grades, a study shows, an intriguing finding for parents on the fence about when to start their child in school.

The study found younger students, especially boys, are also more likely to be started on medications for ADHD and kept on the drugs longer than the oldest children. The medications are generally safe, but can have harmful side effects.

"Doctors and therapists need to factor that into their decision-making," said study co-author Dr. Anupam Jena, of Harvard Medical School. They should ask, "Does he really have ADHD, or is it because he needs six more months to mature?" That extra year makes a big difference.

About 6 million U.S. children and teenagers have been diagnosed with ADHD, which causes inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity. The rate of diagnosis is climbing.

The study, published Wednesday by the New England Journal of Medicine, stemmed from a lunchroom conversation about "kindergarten redshirting" for a co-author's son. The term is borrowed from athletics and means waiting a year to give a child time to mature.

"The parents were thinking about whether or not to hold their child back an additional year," Jena recalled. That led the researchers to ask, "What happens to kids who are in the same class who are perceived to be different?"

They used insurance claims to compare more than 71,000 students with August and September birthdays in 18 states with Sept. 1 cutoffs. A child who turns



CHRISTIAN RANDOLPH, THE FLINT (MICH.) JOURNAL/AP

**A reluctant student is pulled into the first day of kindergarten in 2015 in Clio, Mich. A new study says a diagnosis of ADHD is more likely in the youngest kindergarten students.**

5 before Sept. 1 can start kindergarten. If not, the child waits until the next year. An August birthday can mean a child is the youngest in class while those born in September are the oldest.

Overall, from birth to the first few years of school, the number of children diagnosed with ADHD was low. The researchers calculated that the rate of ADHD diagnosis was a third higher in August-born kids than in September-born kids, based on 309 cases among about 36,300 with August birthdays and 225 cases among about 35,300 born in September.

There was no group difference before age 4; it showed up after school enrollment.

The researchers also looked at asthma, diabetes and obesity rates and found they were the same for the August and September babies. And no other month-to-month comparison showed a sharp difference in ADHD.

Finally, using insurance data for more than 400,000 children in all 50 states, the researchers looked at states that don't use a Sept. 1 cutoff and the effect

disappeared.

Dr. William Cooper, a pediatric and health policy professor at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, who wasn't involved in the research, said younger children can have more trouble paying attention, sitting still and controlling their impulses. Compared to other kids, they may look like they have ADHD.

On the other hand, since there's no lab test for ADHD, doctors rely on subjective observations from parents and teachers. A younger student may simply need time to catch up, but his immature behavior looks like ADHD and raises a teacher's concern, said Dr. Jonathan Posner, an associate professor of psychiatry at Columbia University Medical Center in New York who wasn't involved in the study.

"The information we receive about a child has to be interpreted within a developmental context," Posner said. "A 4-year-old isn't going to respond as well to academic challenges as a 5-year-old."

## Opioid case complicated by claims that involve babies born to addicts

By Geoff Mulvihill

Associated Press

The long-running federal court case seeking to hold drugmakers responsible for the nation's opioid crisis has a new complication: How does it deal with claims covering the thousands of babies born to addicts?

Attorneys representing the children and their guardians want their claims separated from the federal case in Cleveland that involves hundreds of local governments and other entities such as hospitals. They will argue that Thursday before a federal judicial panel in New York.

Babies, unlike governments or businesses, have been directly harmed by the actions of drugmakers and are entitled to their own payments, said Scott Bickford, a lead lawyer for the children and their guardians.

He said initial hospital stays for babies born to an opioid-addicted mother can cost \$200,000 to \$250,000 more than for other infants born without complications.

"Then you have to address their developmental and learning problems," Bickford said. "A lot of them have organ problems. A lot of them have problems we don't even know about."

Drug manufacturers and distributors oppose creating a new structure for the lawsuits over the babies.

Separating the cases would "open the door to the inconsistent and inefficiency that coordinated proceedings are designed to avoid," the manufacturers said in a legal filing.

Other plaintiffs in the omnibus opioid litigation have not objected formally, but some are cool to the

idea of separating the cases involving the children. One of the lead lawyers for the local governments, Paul Farnwell Jr., said he is trying to get help for children born with opioid dependency and have prenatal care funded by the drug industry.

He said all the plaintiffs share a goal: holding drug manufacturers liable for the crisis. Unless that happens, he said, no one will get the payouts they're seeking.

"You've only got to shoot the pig once," he said.

The dispute offers a window into the complicated nature of the litigation in Cleveland, which is the main avenue to a potential nationwide settlement over the opioid crisis.

More than 1,400 plaintiffs have had their federal cases consolidated under a single judge. They include county and local governments, hospitals, unions, American Indian tribes and individuals. Hundreds of others have sued in state courts.

The federal judge, Cleveland-based Judge Dan Polster, has been pushing the parties to reach a settlement.

The sides have been negotiating regularly behind closed doors. The drug industry argues that it should not be held liable because its products are approved by the federal government and prescribed by doctors and because people drink and smoke often do so illicitly.

Lawyers representing children and their guardians say there is precedent for their request to go it alone after Polster granted the tribes a separate legal track for their claims. In August, the judge denied similar tribes' claims brought on behalf of babies.

## NATION

# Southwest apologizes after agent mocks a child named Abcde

BY LINDSEY BEVER  
The Washington Post

A Texas mother is calling out a Southwest Airlines employee who she said mocked her 5-year-old daughter's name and posted a picture of the child's boarding pass on social media.

Traci Redford told ABC affiliate KABC her daughter's name is Abcde, pronounced "ab-si-dee."

The incident occurred several weeks ago when she and her daughter were preparing to board a flight from Santa Ana, California, to El Paso. Redford told the station. A gate agent at John Wayne Airport saw Abcde's name and started pointing, laughing and talking to other employees about Redford and her child.

"So I turned around and just said, 'Hey, I can hear you, so if I can hear you, my daughter can, too. I'd appreciate if you'd just stop,'" she told the station.

She added: "While I was sitting there, she took a picture of my boarding pass and chose to post it on social media, mocking my daughter. It was actually brought to my attention by somebody who had seen it on Facebook and reported it to Southwest Airlines. And after two weeks of doing a formal complaint, Southwest hadn't done anything."

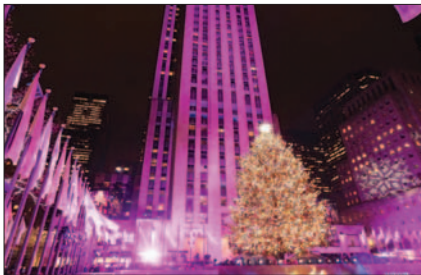
Redford could not immediately

be found for comment Thursday. Southwest Airlines has since apologized, saying that the social media post is "not indicative of the care, respect, and civility" it requires of employees.

"We take great pride in extending our Southwest Hospitality to all of our Customers, which includes living by the Golden Rule and treating every individual with respect, in person or online," a spokesman for the airline said in a statement. "The post is not indicative of the care, respect, and civility we expect from all of our Employees. We have followed up with the Employee involved, and while we do not disclose personnel actions publicly, we are using this as an opportunity to reinforce our policies and emphasize our expectations for all Employees."

Although Abcde is an unusual name, it's not unheard of. In 2014, Votaviv reported that over the past three decades, 328 baby girls have been given that name, 32 of whom were born in 2009. But when the name is entered into the Social Security Administration's database of popular baby names, it states that "Abcde is not in the top 1000 names for any year of birth beginning with 2000."

Nicknames include Ce-Ce, Sidy, Abby, Xyzzye, Aebi and Seedy, according to BabyNameWizard.com.



BRENT N. CLARKE/INVISION/AP

A general view during the 86th annual Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony on Wednesday, in New York.

## Sprucing up NYC: Rockefeller Center lights Christmas tree

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A massive Norway spruce has been lit up in a tradition that ushers in Christmastime in New York City.

Mayor Bill de Blasio flipped the switch Wednesday night to light the Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree.

The 72-foot-tall tree is deco-

rated with 5 miles of multicolored LED lights and a 900-pound Swarovski crystal star.

The 75-year-old tree was donated by a couple in Wallkill, 60 miles north of the city.

It will remain on display until Jan. 7. Then it will be given to Habitat for Humanity to help build homes.

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# WORLD

## May: No-deal Brexit can't be ruled out

Associated Press

LONDON — British Prime Minister Theresa May refused Thursday to rule out Britain leaving the European Union without a deal after the Bank of England warned that such a scenario could plunge the country into its deepest recession in decades.

Parliament is due to vote Dec. 11 on the divorce deal May's government has struck with the EU, and lawmakers from all sides are vowing to reject it.

May was asked by a committee of lawmakers whether she would act to stop a no-deal Brexit if Parliament throws out the agreement.

She said that "if the House were to vote down the deal that has been agreed" there would have to be "some practical steps in relation to no deal."

"Obviously, decisions would have to be taken," she said.

The Bank of England said Wednesday that in a worst-case no-deal scenario, Britain's economy would shrink 8 percent within months as unemployment and inflation soared and the value of the pound plunged.

Bank governor Mark Carney said Thursday that most British businesses were not prepared for a no-deal Brexit.

Carney told the BBC that "less than half of businesses have initiated" contingency plans designed to protect operations in the event Britain leaves the 28-nation bloc without an agreement on future trading relations.

"All the industries, all the infrastructure of the country, are they all ready at this point in time? As far as we can tell, the answer is no," he said.

Separate analysis by government economists said Britain will be poorer after Brexit than if it had stayed in the EU, no matter what sort of trade deal it secures with the bloc. The assessment said the closest trade relationship would produce the least economic damage.

The deal between Britain and the EU lays out in detail the terms of Britain's departure on March 29, but leaves many details of the future relationship to be negotiated during a 21-month transition period.

The EU says Britain will have to follow many of the bloc's rules and regulations if it wants full access to its markets — something pro-Brexit British politicians find hard to swallow.

May told lawmakers that Britain would be aiming to achieve "frictionless trade" with the bloc, but "there are those in the European Union who have yet to be persuaded of that argument."

The EU's chief Brexit negotiator, Michel Barnier, said the current withdrawal accord, struck between Britain and the bloc this month after a year and a half of negotiations, "is the only possible deal."

Briefing the European Parliament, he said that despite the deal, "a long and winding road" lay ahead before Britain's departure in March.

# China halts team's gene-edit work

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE

Associated Press

HONG KONG — China's government ordered a halt Thursday to work by a medical team that claimed to have helped make the world's first gene-edited babies as a group of leading scientists declared that it's still too soon to try to make permanent changes to DNA that can be inherited by future generations.

Chinese Vice Minister of Science and Technology Xu Nanping told state broadcaster CCTV that his ministry is strongly opposed to the efforts that reportedly produced twin girls born earlier this month. Xu called the team's actions illegal and unacceptable and said an investigation had been ordered but made no mention of specific actions taken.

Researcher He Jiankui claims to have altered the DNA of the twins to try to make them resistant to infection with the AIDS virus. Mainstream scientists have condemned the experiment, and universities and government groups are investigating.

He's experiment "crossed the line of morality and ethics adhered to by the academic community and was shocking and unacceptable," Xu said.

A group of leading scientists gathered in Hong Kong this week for an international conference on gene editing, the ability to rewrite the code of life to try to correct or prevent diseases. Although the science holds promise for helping people already born and studies testing that is underway, a statement issued Thursday by the 14-member conference leaders says it's irresponsible to try it on eggs, sperm or embryos except in lab research because not enough is known yet about its risks or safety.

The conference was rocked by the Chinese researcher's claim to have helped make the world's first gene-edited babies. Conference



MARK SCHIEFFELBEIN/AP

**China's government has ordered a halt to work by a medical team that purportedly helped make the world's first gene-edited babies.**

leaders called for an independent investigation of the claim by He, who spoke to the group Wednesday as international criticism of his claim mounted.

There is no independent confirmation of what He says he did. He was scheduled to speak again at the conference Thursday, but he left Hong Kong and through a spokesman sent a statement saying: "I will remain in China, my home country, and cooperate fully with all inquiries about my work. My raw data will be made available for third party review."

Several prominent scientists said the case showed a failure of the field to police itself and

the need for stricter principles or regulations.

"It's not unreasonable to expect the scientific community" to follow guidelines, said David Baltimore, a Nobel laureate from the California Institute of Technology who led the panel.

There already are some rules that should have prevented what He says he did, said Alicia Charo, a University of Wisconsin lawyer and bioethicist and a conference organizer.

"I think the failure was his, not the scientific community," Charo said.

## Filipino policemen convicted of murder in brutal drug war

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — A Philippine court found three police officers guilty on Thursday of killing a student they alleged was a drug dealer in the first known such conviction under the president's deadly crackdown on drugs.

Regional Trial Court Presiding Judge Rodolfo Azucena Jr. ruled the officers murdered Kian Loyd delos Santos, 17, during a raid in Caloocan city's slums in the Manila metropolis last year. It rejected the policemen's claim that the teen fired back while resisting arrest.

The court sentenced the officers, Arnel Oares, Jeremiah Pereda and Jerwin Cruz, to be imprisoned for up to 40 years without parole, although they can appeal. Aside from the prison term, the policemen were ordered to pay damages to delos Santos' impoverished family.

President Rodrigo Duterte's crackdown, which has left thousands of suspects dead, reportedly in clashes with the police, has alarmed Western governments and U.N. rights experts and horrified human rights watchdogs. The volatile president has stressed he does not condone extrajudicial killings, although he has repeat-

edly threatened drug suspects with death and has assured police he would back them up in ways that human rights watchdogs say have encouraged law enforcers to act with impunity.

"A shoot first, think later attitude can never be countenanced in a civilized society. Never has homicide or murder been a function of law enforcement," Azucena said in his ruling. "The public peace is never predicated on the cost of human life."

Duterte's government called the ruling "a triumph of justice" that "disproved critics' assertion that the judiciary was a rubberstamp."

"As we have always stressed, the conduct of the government's anti-illegal drug campaign is based on accountability. Therefore, we do not — and we will never — tolerate unjustified police violence, brutality or killing," presidential spokesman and chief legal counsel Salvador Panelo told a news conference.

Opposition Sen. Risa Hontiveros, who has railed against the drug killings, said the court decision proved that extrajudicial killings under Duterte's crackdown were being committed by rogue members of the national police force.

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## NATION

# Surprise discovery

Blood line of horse breed  
long thought extinct in  
southwest Miss. revived

By JANET McCONAUGHEY  
Associated Press

POPLARVILLE, Miss.

**S**ix foals sired by a cream-colored stallion called DeSoto scamper across a pasture in southwest Mississippi — the first new blood in a century for a line of horses brought to America by Spanish conquistadors and bred by Choctaw Indians who were later forced out of their ancestral homelands.

Choctaw horses were thought to be long gone from this region, disappearing when their Native American owners were expelled from the U.S. Southeast by the government. But the surprise discovery of DeSoto on a farm in Poplarville 13 years ago led to a plan to help the dwindling strain survive.

"That really gives us a shot in the arm," said Bryant Rickman, who has been working since 1980 near Antlers, Okla., to restore the line. He estimates he has bred more than 300 of the horses from nine mares and three stallions. But having so few stallions led to a bottleneck because the gene pool was so small.

Choctaws saw great power in horses. Ian Thompson, tribal historic preservation officer for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, said their word for horse, *issoba*, means "like a deer" — and the deer was the tribe's most important animal, both economically and spiritually. "So naming the horse after the deer was really saying something," Thompson said.

Choctaw horses are descended from those brought to the United States in the 1500s and later by Spanish explorers and colonists, said Dr. D. Phillip Sponenberg, of the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine at Virginia Tech.

It's one strain in a breed called Colonial Spanish horses, often referred to by the misleading term "Spanish mustang." Colonial Spanish horses are among the world's few genetically unique horse breeds and are of great historic importance to this country, Sponenberg said.

The Choctaw nation lived in much of what are now Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. Choctaws owned tens of thousands of horses by 1830, when Congress gave President Andrew Jackson the power to force Indians out of lands east of the Mississippi, Thompson said.

The relocation of Choctaw, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Muscogee and Seminole Indians to Oklahoma, which has come to be known as the "Trail of Tears," took decades. Thompson said more than 12,000 Choctaw people made the journey, but an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 died along the way. In Oklahoma, the Choctaw and their horses were part of the cattle ranching economy.

The horses are small but tough and durable.

"They're very people-oriented. They're just as docile as your favorite dog," said Rickman.

DeSoto was discovered in 2005 when Sponenberg visited Poplarville to check out small cattle descended from Spanish colonial stock. He was surprised to find Spanish colonial sheep there, too. Then came the day's biggest surprise.

"Out of the woods came this horse, single-footing," he said, referring to a smooth gait between walking and galloping, rather than the bouncing trot common to most horses.

Bill Frank Brown was 14 when he inherited the Poplarville farm that Sponenberg visited in 2005. The farm had been in Brown's family since 1881, and the livestock there? Even longer. Brown had three stallions back then, including DeSoto. He called them pine tacky horses. The Texas A&M veterinary school tested samples of the stallions' DNA, and they matched those of Rickman's Choctaws.

Two of the stallions have since died, leaving only DeSoto.

Sponenberg picked the mares that would be the best genetic matches for DeSoto, and they were brought to Mississippi last year.

A pine tacky Choctaw cross-stud colt is seen on Bill Frank Brown's farm in Poplarville, Miss.

GERALD HERBERT/AP



## BUSINESS/WEATHER

## In China, electric cars talk to government

By ERIKA KINETZ  
Associated Press

SHANGHAI — Global automakers are feeding real-time location information and dozens of other data points from electric vehicles to Chinese government monitoring centers, potentially adding to China's rich kit of surveillance tools as President Xi Jinping steps up the use of technology to track Chinese citizens. Generally, it happens without car owners' knowledge, The Associated Press found.

More than 200 automakers selling electric vehicles in China — including Tesla, Volkswagen, BMW, Daimler, Ford, General Motors, Nissan, Mitsubishi and U.S.-listed start-up NIO — send at least 61 data points to government-backed monitoring platforms under rules published in 2016.

Automakers say they are merely complying with local laws, which apply only to alternative energy vehicles. Chinese officials say the data are used for analytics to improve public safety, facilitate industrial development and infrastructure planning, and to prevent fraud in subsidy programs.

But critics say the information

collected exceeds those goals and could be used to undermine foreign carmakers' competitive position, or for surveillance. Under Xi's leadership, China has unleashed a war on dissent, marshalling big data and artificial intelligence to create a more perfect kind of policing that can quickly neutralize perceived threats to the stability of the ruling Communist Party.

There is also concern about the precedent these rules set for sharing data from next-generation connected cars, which may soon transmit even more personal information.

"You're learning a lot about people's day-to-day activities and that becomes part of what I call ubiquitous surveillance," said Michael Chertoff, who was secretary of the Department of Homeland Security under President George W. Bush and wrote a book called "Exploding Data." "Companies have to ask themselves, 'Is this really something we want to do in terms of our corporate values, even if it means otherwise forgoing that market?'"

At the Shanghai Electric Vehicle Public Data Collecting, Monitoring and Research Center, a wall-sized screen glows with dots. Each represents one of more than

222,000 vehicles connected to the system, coursing along Shanghai's roads to create a massive real-time map that could reveal where people live, shop, work, and worship.

Data also flows to a national monitoring center run by the Beijing Institute of Technology, which pulls information from more than 1.1 million new energy vehicles. Those numbers are about to get much bigger, as Beijing pushes electric vehicle development as part of its "Made in China 2025" industrial development plan.

Ding Xiaohua, the deputy director of the Shanghai center, said monitoring is not designed to facilitate state surveillance, though data can be shared with police, prosecutors or courts if a formal request is made.

The center is registered as a nonprofit but is tightly aligned with and funded by the government.

There is a privacy firewall built into the system. The data center has each car's unique vehicle identification number, but to link that with the owner's personal details, it must go through the automaker — a step it has taken in the past. Chinese law enforcement can also link the vehicle identification number with the owner's

personal information.

"To speak bluntly, the government doesn't need to surveil through a platform like ours," Ding said.

Many vehicles in the U.S., Europe and Japan transmit position information back to automakers, who feed it to car-tracking apps, maps that pinpoint nearby amenities and emergency services providers. But the data stop there. Government or law enforcement agencies would generally only be able to access vehicle data in the context of a specific criminal investigation and in the U.S. would typically need a court order, lawyers said.

Automakers initially resisted sharing information with the Shanghai monitoring center; then the government made transmitting data a prerequisite for getting incentives.

"They gave you dozens of reasons why they can't give you the data," said a government consultant who helped evaluate the policy and spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive issues. "Then we offer the incentives. Then they want to give us the data because it's part of their profit."

There was concern the shared data might reveal proprietary

information about, for example, how hybrids switch between gas and battery power, and eventually let automakers up for commercial competition with a Chinese government entity.

Ding said confidentiality agreements protect proprietary company information.

Still, he is open about his desire to make money from the data.

"We have done some explorations," he said. "But there is still a distance from truly monetizing it."

## EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Nov. 30)	\$1.6681
Dollar buys (Nov. 30)	69.8561
British pound (Nov. 30)	\$1.31
Japanese yen (Nov. 30)	111.00
South Korean won (Nov. 30)	1,095.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
British pound	\$1.2780
Canada (Dollar)	1.3269
China (Yuan)	6.9425
Denmark (Krone)	6.5544
Egypt (Pound)	17.9578
Hong Kong (Dollar)	\$1.1386/0.8782
Hungary (Forint)	7.8226
Israel (Shekel)	284.29
Japan (Yen)	3.7120
Kuwait (Dinar)	113.29
Norway (Krone)	8.3041
Philippines (Peso)	8.5311
Poland (Zloty)	52.38
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.77
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3753
South Korea (Won)	1,120.27
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9950
Thailand (Baht)	32.94
Turkey (New Lira)	5.1636

Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currencies. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

## INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.25
Discount rate	2.75
Federal funds market rate	2.00
3-month bill	2.37
30-year bond	3.34

## EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Germany	\$2.870	\$3.231	\$3.469	\$3.527
Change in price	-2.4 cents	-5.7 cents	-5.5 cents	-2.1 cents
Netherlands	...	\$3.391	\$3.629	\$3.822
Change in price	...	-9.9 cents	-5.5 cents	-12.0 cents
U.K.	...	\$3.165	\$3.403	\$3.461
Change in price	...	-5.7 cents	-5.5 cents	-2.1 cents
Azores	...	...	\$3.390	...
Change in price	...	...	-5.5 cents	...
Belgium	...	\$3.191	\$3.479	\$3.39
Change in price	...	-2.3 cents	+0.2 cents	+6.6 cents
Turkey	...	...	\$3.453	\$3.344
Change in price	...	...	No change	-2.1 cents
Italy	...	\$4.127	...	\$4.202
Change in price	...	-3.6 cents	...	-3.7 cents

## PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Unleaded	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Japan	...	\$3.249	...	\$3.309
Change in price	...	-6.0 cents	...	-2.0 cents
Okhawa	...	\$2.589	...	\$3.309
Change in price	...	-7.0 cents	...	-2.0 cents
South Korea	...	\$2.629	...	\$3.289
Change in price	...	-7.0 cents	...	-2.0 cents
Guam	...	\$2.609**	\$3.039	\$3.329
Change in price	...	-7.0 cents	-5.0 cents	...

\* Diesel EFD \*\* Midgrade  
For the week of Dec. 1-7

## MARKET WATCH

	Nov. 28, 2018
Dow Jones Industrials	617.70
	25,366.43
Nasdaq composite	208.89
	7,291.59
Standard & Poor's 500	61.62
	2,743.79
Russell 2000	37.52
	1,630.38

## WEATHER OUTLOOK

## FRIDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



## FRIDAY IN EUROPE



## SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

# WEEKEND



Jeff Tweedy's new album, memoir  
Pages 37-38

## NUCLEAR WASTE



'Fallout 76' finally lets players explore the post-apocalyptic landscape with a friend, but somehow it still fails to feel engaging

Video games, Page 26

# WEEKEND: GADGETS

## Firefighters, servicemembers among those using TikTok app

By ABBY OHLHEISER  
The Washington Post

Camille Gates' husband would stare at his phone for long stretches of time, laughing at amateur music videos on an app called TikTok. Look, he showed Gates, nurses like her were on TikTok, dancing in their scrubs at work. He persuaded Gates to join.

One week later, the 30-year-old in rural Wisconsin had nearly 50,000 TikTok fans.

TikTok, at its core, is an app for creating and sharing short videos set to music. Lip-synching and dancing are pretty popular genres. Most creators jump on the viral "challenges," emote over famous monologues from movies and TV or produce clever illusions through editing.

Last month, TikTok was downloaded in the United States more than 6 million times. Its predecessor, Musical.ly, was where 13-year-old aspiring internet celebrities created and exhausted memes before the old people caught on. But something funny happened after TikTok's Chinese parent company bought Musical.ly this year and merged them: Police officers, people serving in the military, mechanics and Walmart employees joined in. Fall into one of these occupational niches on TikTok, and you'll feel like you've stumbled into "The Ellen DeGeneres Show" audience: an earnest, nonstop, normcore dance party.

The app cemented this status when lip-synch battle impresario Jimmy Fallon joined it recently, launching the tumbledwee challenge. It's pretty easy: Choose the song that Fallon's show created for the challenge, and then film yourself rolling on the floor like a tumbledwee blowing in the wind. Anyone can do it.

TikTok has become a unique cultural gathering place. It's where teens and tweens define challenges, games and visual style. Simultaneously, it's where, months after those memes are no longer cool, new communities rediscover them and make them their own. It's as if the moms who post inspirational minion memes on Facebook and the stars of Vine's heyday are all finding space on the same app. (Perhaps that's why Facebook has already launched a feature that is, essentially, a TikTok clone.)

On Military TikTok, uniformed personnel are getting thousands of likes for videos lip-synching to "Baby Shark," a children's earworm that surged into mainstream memery last summer. "The military is such a strong group and it's really tightknit. When something catches it spreads," said Michael Eckert, a Marine who runs a

popular fitness TikTok channel. "Being in the military is a really stressful environment. Being able to get away and shed your skin for 15 to 20 seconds and then go back to work keeps our mentality strong."

"Baby Shark" is also pretty popular with TikTok firefighters. The #ThinBlueLine hashtag is full of videos from law enforcement, and has more than 37 million views. One of the more popular memes here is #SnapYourLife, an old Musically meme that involves snapping your fingers to the beat of a

song in front of the camera. With each snap, you show another part of your day. Law enforcement officers have revived it, using the meme to show off their uniforms and police vehicles. #ThinBlueLine is

also peppered with super-earnest and emotional videos from law enforcement spouses about how proud they are of their husbands and wives.

Nurse TikTok, Gates said, is populated with medical professionals who make their videos on break. Sometimes they use the #SnapYourLife meme and send themselves into scrubs and sterile clothing. Other repeated tropes are pretty nurse-specific, like a nurse playing a patient pretending to run away while another nurse, holding an injection, chases after them. "Nurses have a funny sense of humor that is maybe different from everyone else. It's how you get through this job," Gates said.

Gates works nights in a hospital delivery ward, which can be crazy busy or crazy slow. After she heard about TikTok from her husband, she showed her co-workers some funny nurse dances.

Gates turned on Train's "Hey Soul Sister" to dance to, and set up her phone to record a video. A line of her co-workers, all in their scrubs, did a short dance in a hospital hallway — ending with one co-worker flopping.

"It's a pretty easy app to use. I'm not super-savvy," she said. Gates posted the video, her second TikTok ever, to her account, and forgot about it. That is, until it started blowing up. "One of my co-workers pulled it up and was like, 'Did you see how many views it has now?'" Gates said. The video has more than 600,000 likes.

For Gates, TikTok is the one app that makes her happy. She doesn't care for Twitter. And Facebook has become an endless stream of posts that make her frustrated or sad. Gates believes TikTok has the unique potential to spread joy.

"I like that it gives people a way to express themselves and peek into other people's lives," Gates said. Scrolling through her feed, she said, "I'm not getting angry."

## GADGET WATCH

## Making Amazon's voice assistant work for you

By GREGG ELLMAN  
Tribune News Service

Alexa do this, Alexa do that. The voice assistant's ubiquity has even caused the decline of people naming their children Alexa. According to a blog post from a sociologist at the University of Maryland, the name Alexa has seen a 21.3 percent drop in 2016 and another 19.5 percent in 2017.

And yet, there are some who are unfamiliar with the product. I am often asked about Alexa. With the system set to be one of the most popular holiday gifts this year, it's worth knowing some details.

Let's take it from the beginning. Alexa is Amazon's virtual voice assistant, released in November 2014. You have to pay for the hardware, but the service is free and if you have an Amazon Prime account (\$119 yearly), you'll be able to unlock a lot more of Alexa's benefits including a free music service.

The system is controlled by speaking commands to Amazon's Echo Bluetooth speaker. I'm using an Echo Plus and it was grading it on the sound alone, it's outstanding.

Setting it up is simple, especially since you get written instructions along with Alexa speaking instructions. Since it's driven by Amazon, you do have to have an account to log into the Amazon Alexa app (iOS App Store, Google Play Store or Amazon Appstore) on your smartphone. After logging into the app, it's pretty straightforward; set up the app, connect your home Wi-Fi to the Alexa and start talking to your new friend.

The voice assistant system can do a lot of things; control your smart home devices to unlock doors, change a thermostat and turn an appliance on or off. You can also make phone calls, send messages, get the news of the day, weather reports and even shop, to name just a few features. Your choices are endless.

After opening my Echo Plus and going through the setup, I asked Alexa to play WFAN sports radio (my favorite New York station) and within a few seconds, it was playing. My next command was to play SiriusXM radio. Alexa told me I had to link my account, which I did, and had my music playing right away.

Next on my list was the indoor Amazon cloud

cam security camera (\$119.99), which records in 1080p HD. The setup included the cloud cam app, connecting to your Wi-Fi and a few other quick steps. Before I knew it, there I was facing the camera and watching myself on my smart-phone. The camera has a 120-degree view, a built-in mic and speaker for two-way communication and infrared night vision.

You get free storage for the most recent 24 hours of clips, or you can upgrade to 30 days of storage and have up to 10 cameras connected.

The choices of devices that are Alexa-comparable are increasing every day, including Bluetooth speakers and lightbulbs. Setting up a light with a timer takes just a little longer than screwing in a bulb.

With a Philips Hue lightbulb screwed into a basic lamp, per the instructions I turned the lamp on and off really quickly. This allows it to go in pairing mode and have the Alexa app discover it. From there, just tell Alexa when you want it on or off, or just set a schedule as I did by telling Alexa to turn the lamp on at 5 p.m. and off at 7 a.m. daily.

I already have Alexa-compatible (second- and third-generation models) Nest thermostats installed in my house, so I added them with the app. So now when my wife is cold, all she has to say is, "Alexa, raise the temperature by 5 degrees."

IHome's Wi-Fi outdoor smart-plug is perfect for this time of year for controlling holiday lights. The plug is weather resistant and with an Alexa command it will turn the lights on and off, or just go by a daily schedule. Obviously it's not limited to holiday lights; it will control whatever is plugged into it.

One of my favorite features is voice-controlled shopping, which is only available to Amazon Prime members. So if you're out of detergent, coffee or other Prime products, just tell Alexa what you need. Since it is already connected to your account, your credit card will be charged, and you can rest assured that whatever you asked for is on the way.

I finished by asking Alexa if I can now have a margarita. She replied that she doesn't have an opinion on that, so I made the decision on my own.

For more on smart speakers, including the Apple HomePod and Google Home, see Pages 34-35.

The Amazon cloud cam security camera records in 1080p HD and can be controlled by Alexa.

AMAZON/TNS

ON THE COVER: "Fallout 76" limits interactions with nonplayer characters and encourages players to be the catalysts for the action.

Bethesda Softworks

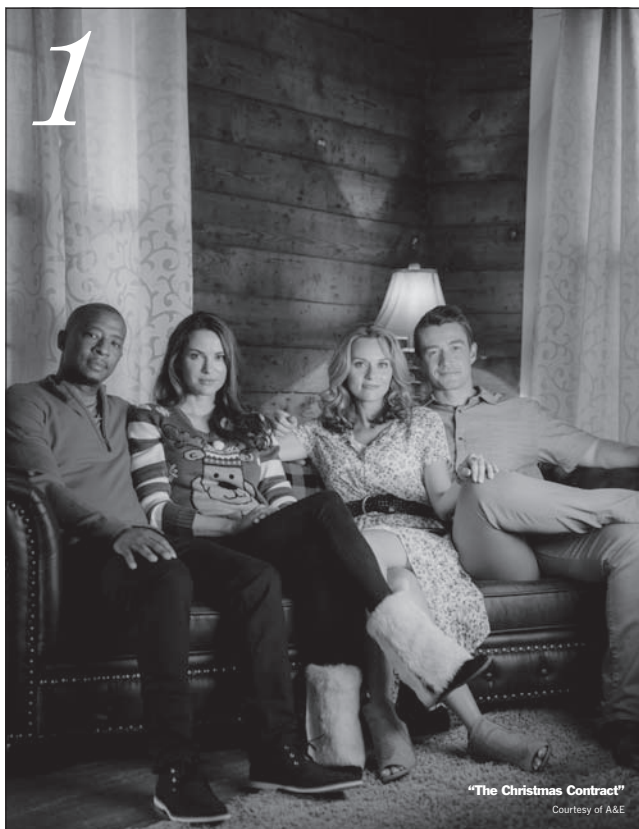


## WEEKEND

# CHECK IT OUT

## Events, entertainment and other ways to fill your free time

1

**"The Christmas Contract"**

Courtesy of A&amp;E

### Christmas-themed comfort TV now on AFN

When it comes to goey Christmas movies with happy endings, the Hallmark Channel has the market cornered. These movies have so many fans that Hallmark sells a shirt that says, "All I want to do is drink hot cocoa and watch Hallmark Channel." The plots never stray far from a predictable theme, but that's just the sort of comfort food that some folks crave, especially this time of year. AFN is airing many of these popular

made-for-TV films. This week, "The Christmas Contract" makes its way to AFN-Movie. According to [imdb.com](http://imdb.com), the plot is this: A recently single woman dreads the thought of going back to her hometown in Louisiana for Christmas when she finds out her ex-boyfriend will be there with his new girlfriend. (Spoiler alert: We predict it'll be all right for everybody by the end.)

• **"The Christmas Contract" airs Sunday on AFN-Movie.**

2

### Carey's 'Caution' a comeback

You know who's hard to avoid this time of year? Mariah Carey. If you haven't already heard 1994's "All I Want for Christmas Is You" a dozen times, well, it's coming. Carey hasn't changed much since the '90s, and her latest album, "Caution," holds no surprises. But if you love this diva, that's a sugarplum season-worthy good thing.

• **Music review on Page 37.**

3

### Wilco's Tweedy writes a book

Wilco frontman Jeff Tweedy isn't known for oversharing. In fact, he says he doesn't really like reading autobiographies. Nonetheless, he allowed himself to be talked into writing one. Tweedy delves into his upbringing, and includes interviews with his family, as well as some interesting backstory regarding former band Uncle Tupelo. It's not the wildest musician memoir out there, but it's honest, and plenty interesting.

• **Profile, book review on Page 38.**



4

### YouTube offers 4 Grande portions of 'Sweetener'

If you're one of those people who, for whatever reason (and we're not judging), can't get enough of teen TV star-turned-pop-star Ariana Grande, YouTube has what you need. Grande is posting a four-part docu-series she's calling "Dangerous Woman Diaries." The videos go behind the scenes of the making of Grande's latest album, "Sweetener," and shows new footage from her "Dangerous Woman" tour.

• **Watch the first episode at [tinyurl.com/y9mpokym](http://tinyurl.com/y9mpokym).**

## WEEKEND: MOVIES



"If Beale Street Could Talk" (Annapurna Pictures)



"Black Panther" (Marvel Studios/Disney)



"The Favourite" (Fox Searchlight Pictures)



"First Man" (Universal Pictures)



"Roma" (Netflix)



"BlackKkKlansman" (Focus Features)



"Roma" (Netflix)



"A Star Is Born" (Warner Bros.)



"Green Book" (Universal Pictures)

Films  
that should  
be nominated  
for best  
picture

By GLENN WHIPP  
Los Angeles Times

Netflix broke through at the Emmy Awards five years ago when Television Academy voters gave "House of Cards" nine nominations, making it the first streaming program to earn a series nod. Since then, Netflix has racked up 225 Emmy nominations and 43 Emmys and, with its monolithic-for-your-consideration promotional spaces, practically redefined television awards campaigning.

The film side has proved trickier for Netflix. Oscar voters have been largely immune to the streamer's offerings, ignoring titles such as 2015's "Beasts of No Nation" that other awards season groups embraced. ("Beasts" actor Idris Elba became the first Screen Actors Guild Award winner to not earn an Oscar nomination.)

But let's also be real here. For all the talk about Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences members viewing Netflix as an existential threat to the theatrical film experience, the streamer has never had a movie that could be marked as a slam-dunk best picture contender. The child soldier story of "Beasts" was emotionally

powerful and undeniably tragic. It was also overlong, unfocused and seemed to take a bit too much pleasure in the atrocities it was expertly documenting.

Subsequent Netflix contenders, including two from last year — Bong Joon-ho's enjoyably nutty and strange creature feature "Okja" and Dee Rees' leisurely paced, disquieting melodrama "Mudbound" — had their merits. "Mudbound," in fact, picked up four Oscar nominations. Did it belong among the best picture nominees? I'd argue that if any movie was overlooked last year, it was Sean Baker's spellbinding, immersive drama "The Florida Project."

This year, though, Netflix has a movie that not only will likely earn the streamer its first-ever best picture Oscar nomination, it's a film so good that it could go on to win.

That movie is Alfonso Cuarón's "Roma," a glorious, intimate drama that combines the filmmaker's gift for visual poetry with a story that is delicate, mysterious and full of surprises. At times, the movie, beautifully shot in black and white, feels experimental in its novelistic approach to storytelling and memoir. But for all its formal prowess, "Roma" is fundamentally a movie that elevates the spirit with a generous empathy and love for its characters. In telling the story of the women who raised him, the Oscar-winning Cuarón has made his greatest film.

Film critic groups are going to bow to it. (The movie, produced by Participant Media, already won the Golden Lion prize for best film at the Venice festival.) I'd expect "Roma" to win the top prize from either the New York Film Critics Circle or the Los Angeles Film Critics Association. Maybe both. That's rare, but Richard Linklater's "Boyhood" was in special occasion to pull off the feat in 2014.

A win from either group would give "Roma" momentum. More important though, Netflix's awards-season consultants convinced the company to break precedent and released Cuarón's film that would be available for streaming three weeks before it will be available for streaming.

That provides "Roma" a window of opportunity to build buzz and assuage academy naysayers who grumble about Netflix's policy of releasing movies simultaneously in theaters and on its service. It will also provide awards-season voters with more opportunity to see the meticulously crafted, 65mm, Dolby Atmos movie in an optimal

presentation. (Netflix is also offering early theatrical releases for the Coens' inspired western anthology "The Ballad of Buster Scruggs" and Susanne Bier's thriller "Bird Box.")

"I want this movie to be seen by as many people as possible," Cuarón told me recently. "And Netflix will make that possible. I also appreciate their effort and passion to provide people with the chance to see it in a theater. This was a labor of love."

It's impossible to envision a scenario in which "Roma" doesn't earn a best picture nomination and make history for Netflix. Its chances of winning the Oscar are less certain. It's a foreign-language movie (Spanish and Mixtec) shot in black and white with a cast that will be largely unknown to voters.

Other movies are also likely to find champions among critics groups, namely "The Favourite," Yorgos Lanthimos' stinging, subversive costume drama, and "If Beale Street Could Talk," Barry Jenkins' follow-up to "Moonlight" that masterfully adapts James Baldwin's 1974 novel. Spike Lee's "BlackKkKlansman," his best movie in years (not including his noteworthy documentaries), could also win a few honors, including long-overdue recognition for Lee himself.

Here's how I'd handicap the best picture race at this early juncture, with the movies ranked based on their likelihood of securing a nomination.

- 1) "A Star Is Born"
- 2) "Roma"
- 3) "Green Book"
- 4) "The Favourite"
- 5) "If Beale Street Could Talk"
- 6) "Black Panther"
- 7) "BlackKkKlansman"
- 8) "First Man"
- 9) "Widows"

The wild card remains Adam McKay's sure-to-be-scathing Dick Cheney biopic "Vice." Everyone loves a latecomer barging in and upending awards-season absolutes, and "Vice" has the potential to be that spoiler. Or it could be like "Unbroken," and the song will remain the same. We'll find out soon.

Academy Award nominations will be announced Jan. 22.

## WEEKEND: MOVIES

## ‘Suspiria’ a jumbled take on horror classic

By MICHAEL O’SULLIVAN  
The Washington Post

**T**he original “Suspiria” did a lot with a little. A prime example of the Italian horror genre known as “giallo,” Dario Argento’s 1977 film featured cheap-looking sets, badly dubbed dialogue, laughable overacting, blood that looked like it came from a Sherwin-Williams can, and a gossamer-thin plot about a young American student at a German dance academy who discovers that the school is a front for an ancient coven of murderous witches.

And yet that film, which is now considered a cult classic, managed to create and sustain a mood of psychological terror through the use of stylized violence, luridly lit scenes and an aggressively unsettling score by the Italian rock band Goblin.

The new remake of “Suspiria,” by the Italian director of “Call Me by Your Name,” Luca Guadagnino, does the exact opposite. It takes every resource available to a recently minted Oscar nominee — cash, big Hollywood stars, handsome cinematography (by “Call Me by Your Name’s” Sayombhu Mukdeeprom), music by Radiohead’s Thom Yorke, and a screenplay (written with Guadagnino’s “A Bigger Splash” collaborator David Kalogridis) that is stuffed with ideas about Nazis, the political terrorism of the late 1970s, art, religion and Freudian psychology — but does almost nothing with it.

Worst of all, it isn’t even especially scary.

Guadagnino has said in interviews that he’s less interested in cheap jump-scares than in building a relentless mood of suspense. But “Suspiria” doesn’t



A world-renowned dance company is at the center of a dark mystery in “Suspiria,” starring Dakota Johnson, center, and Tilda Swinton (not pictured).

Amazon Studios

even really do that — not unless you count checking your watch every few minutes to see when this 2½-hour film will be over. (The movie is distributed by Amazon Studios. Amazon chief executive Jeffrey Bezos owns The Washington Post.)

As in the original, “Suspiria” begins with the arrival of American dance student Susie (Dakota Johnson) at a venerable German dance academy, just as Patricia (Chloe Grace Moretz), a traumatized current student, is seen fleeing from it in a fugue state. Unlike the original, however, the new film actually acknowledges the existence of the outside world. Set in a divided Berlin, the story takes place against the backdrop of the October 1977 hijacking of Lufthansa flight 181 by the Popular Front for the Lib-

eration of Palestine, a group that sought the release of members of the Red Army Faction (aka the Baader-Meinhof Gang). Patricia may or may not have had associations with that collective of militant leftists.

But put that question right out of your head.

You’ll need room in it to accommodate other characters that come and go here, like poltergeists, in a haunted house of a script that includes, to name only a few: Patricia’s Jewish psychiatrist — and Holocaust survivor — Josef Klempfer; the school’s demanding artistic director, Madame Blanc (both played by Tilda Swinton); and Susie’s Mennonite mother (Malgosia Bela), who is seen in creepy, if inscrutable, deathbed flashbacks. The theme of motherhood and its discontents

gets chewed on like a vulture tearing at carrion, but so does the topic of ethnic nationalism.

Blanc’s magnum opus is a dance, said to have been created in 1948, called “Volk” (German for “the people”). Neither subtext goes much of anywhere and only overburdens a story that is no more substantial than the 1977 original, despite being loaded up with heavy-sounding gobbledygook.

There’s also a disturbing, if unintended, undercurrent of misogyny, epitomized not only by the theme of witchcraft (a manifestation of men’s fear of women’s power, if ever there was one), but in the film’s frequent nudity and violent objectification of women’s bodies. Two scenes feature female characters being grotesquely contorted by super-

natural forces. There’s a thin line between inducing the male gaze, as Guadagnino claims to have intended, and revealing in it. “Suspiria” culminates in a climax so bloody, gross and confusing that you might feel like you need an explainer just to understand the several explainer articles that have cropped up online, like flies on a corpse, to help viewers process the over-the-top ending.

That said, there are some things to admire (“enjoy” seems the wrong word) about “Suspiria.” Blanc’s dance, choreographed by Damien Jalet, features a muscular sequence of angular thrusts and jerks, convincingly delivered by Johnson and the other actresses. In the context of the film, in which movement functions as a form of nonverbal spell-casting, it works beautifully. And Swinton (who also does triple-duty in a third role, late in the film) delivers her usual tour de force performance, one that is never less than spell-binding in its own right.

As for the look of the film, Mukdeeprom’s cinematography is muted where the 1977 film was garish. It’s handsome to look at, even if Guadagnino sometimes apes Argento’s jumpy, quick-cut style of storytelling to a fault.

It’s hard to know who “Suspiria” is for. Arguably too radical a reimagining for fans of the first film, it’s also likely to be too pretentious for aficionados of workaday horror. Call it an arthouse slasher film. Call it a beautiful mess. Just don’t call me with questions about what any of it means.

“Suspiria” is rated R for disturbing material involving ritualistic violence, bloody images and graphic nudity, and for some coarse language, including sexual references. Running time: 152 minutes.

## ALSO PLAYING

## ‘The Possession of Hannah Grace’

A shocking exorcism spirals out of control, claiming the life of a young woman in “The Possession of Hannah Grace.” Months later, Megan Reed (Shay Mitchell, right) is working the graveyard shift in the morgue when she takes delivery of a disfigured cadaver. Locked alone inside the basement corridors, Megan begins to experience horrifying visions and starts to suspect that the body might be possessed by a ruthless demonic force. A review of “The Possession of Hannah Grace” was not available at press time. The horror film is rated R for gruesome images and terror throughout. Running time: 86 minutes.

Screen Gems-Sony





# WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

By BRIAN BOWERS  
Stars and Stripes

**W**aking up in Vault 76 is a lonely experience.

You start Bethesda Softworks' "Fallout 76" by stepping out of an underground vault 20 years after a nuclear war. The vault was packed with the best and the brightest among Vault-Tec's employees — a crew intended to be the first to step onto the blasted landscape and start rebuilding civilization.

But apparently, you had a little too much to drink during the vault's final party and were the last to leave the facility. You're left with a few scraps of gear and a meager set of instructions as you pass beyond the great metal door and enter a post-apocalyptic West Virginia.

It's a scenario that's not too far removed from beginnings of other games in the franchise. However, "Fallout 76" represents a major departure from the rest of Bethesda's entries in the series.

Earlier games allowed a single player to explore the devastated wastelands around Washington, Las Vegas and Boston, either bringing some degree of civilization or dealing destruction to the scattered settlements of survivors.

Nonplayer characters — humans, super mutants and radiation-scarred ghouls — are at the core of each game. They present quest opportunities, buy and sell goods, provide companionship and — of course — represent that game's biggest villains.

But in "Fallout 76," only a few robotic quest-givers and merchants dot the map. Most humans have been eliminated from the hills and hollows of West Virginia — many quite recently.

It's almost unimaginable to have a "Fallout" game without scores of bedraggled settlers, vicious raiders, deluded cultists, single-minded crusaders and mad scientists. But with "Fallout 76," you'll not only have to imagine that world but you'll have to step into it.

To compensate for the lack of NPC interaction, the game provides quests and quite a bit of lore in the computer's entries, tapes and journals of the fallen. However, this simply adds to the bleak atmosphere.

It's common to receive a quest to speak with someone only to find that person's recently shattered body at the end of your journey.

The game is designed to let online players be the catalysts for much of the action. Each game instance hosts about two dozen players at a time, and these gamers can cooperate to tackle quests or attack everyone in range or pretty much ignore each other. So far, most players choose to do the latter — in effect creating two dozen single-player games on the same map.

It's not hard to find other players since they are marked on the map. But unless you're teaming up with a friend or joining others in a public event, interactions are usually limited and unwelcoming — a simple wave, a potshot or a brief conversation over the mic.

When the game was announced, many feared the game would devolve into a variation of "DayZ," in which players do nothing more than hunt others down, kill them and steal their hard-earned gear. However, Bethesda instituted a number of safeguards to reduce that possibility. For example, damage to unwilling players is limited so they can choose flight if they don't want to fight. Damage reaches normal levels only when a target returns fire and a traditional shootout ensues. When someone manages to kill an unwilling player, they are marked as a wanted murderer on the map and a bounty is placed on their head. Finally, if someone becomes a pest, you can block them from view and from interactions.

Much of the gameplay will be very familiar to "Fallout" fans. Nearly everything wants to kill you, so you'll need weapons and sturdy armor to keep death at bay. Weapons ranging from primitive pipe guns to miniature nukes are available. The wrist-mounted Pip Boy still helps you manage your gear and upgrade your stats, as well as find a good radio station. You still need to search blasted buildings for weapons, ammo and materials that can be used to craft and repair your items. And like "Fallout 4," you can build your own buildings.

## LITTLE LIFE

'Fallout' fans have always thought it might be fun to explore the wasteland with a friend. With '76,' they get the opportunity, for better or for worse



However, many of these things have been altered and new mechanics have been added, presumably to make the game more interesting in its new online format.

A few examples:

- Many areas offer public events — missions that involved cooperative fighting, searching and escorting — to encourage interaction among players. This is a popular activity in the game "Destiny" and translates pretty well when several players are in the same area. Unfortunately, players tend to spread out in "Fallout 76," so many of these end up as solo missions.

- When you level up, you can gain or upgrade abilities by selecting cards from randomly selected packs. This randomness introduces a level of uncertainty into the character progression process that I don't find very appealing.

- You're provided with a portable campsite. You can pack up your gear and all of the buildings you've constructed and move them anywhere on the map.

- You'll need to keep yourself fed and hydrated, which can be tricky when most food and water is irradiated. As a result, you'll need to maintain a stash of Rad-Away to stay healthy. But in the end, food and water seems to be relatively plentiful, so this feels more like busywork than an actual challenge.

- The VATS aiming system has been streamlined to make it compatible with the unpausable reality of online multiplayer gameplay. Instead of halting the action so you can decide whether to shoot a super mutant in the head or in the leg, the new system gives you targeting data that updates in real time as you and your target move. As a result, you might be able to lock onto your target, but you have only a split second to pull the trigger.

- Weapons and armor degrade with use, which means you'll need to repair them periodically to keep them in working order. This isn't actually new to the series, but it returns after a hiatus.

- The mechanics for building a base are much more fluid and refined than they were in "Fallout 4." This permits more efficient building, but a limited construction budget prevents true creativity.

- You can store and retrieve your gear at your campsite or any gas station or train station, which is incredibly handy. Unfortunately, total storage is limited to 400 pounds. This quickly fills, and you're left making some very tricky decisions on what to keep and what to discard. Since crafting and repairing armor and weapons are frequent activities, you need to store an awful lot of material. As a result, this limit gets annoying only a few hours into the game and only gets worse as you progress.

- New types of mutants make an appearance, including giant bat-like scorch beasts and several creatures based on West Virginia legends. You can battle the Flatwoods Monster, Beast of Grafton and — of course — Mothman.

- As an incentive to team up, bits of nuclear launch code are scattered across the map. If a team finds the code, they can launch a nuke, then wade into the radiation cloud to battle whatever emerges to pick up superior gear and experience.

The game's technical aspects don't present any great leaps forward.

The graphics are basically the same as "Fallout 4." And it's not uncommon to see visual glitches — dead ghouls twerking, items floating in mid-air and such.

Aside from streamlining the VATS targeting system, the combat mechanics don't seem to have evolved. That's not good. Player vs. player fighting requires smooth movement and combat controls and you won't find them here. However, everyone suffers under the same mechanics, so it's a level playing field.

The game earns a mature rating for violence and gore.

In the end, "Fallout 76" can be interesting and even entertaining, but it still feels a bit hollow. It lacks a true story and is devoid of real characters. In their place, it offers the possibility of online interactions and content that I normally would consider filler between my adventures. As a result, the game is never truly engaging.

While I have enjoyed my time in West Virginia, I can't help but think it would have been much better with nonplayer characters and better-developed stories. Other online games — including Bethesda's own "Elder Scrolls Online" — manage to deliver these as well as robust multiplayer action.

I hold out hope that Bethesda will revise its course and bring more life to the game.

**Bottom line:** C  
Online: fallout.bethesda.net  
Platforms: PlayStation 4, Xbox One, PC  
Bethesda provided a copy of the game for review purposes.

## WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

## Europe

**Right: The towering Spire of the Immaculate Virgin stands near the Church of Gesu Nuovo in Naples, Italy.**

**Far right: A gold dome appears at the center of the vaulted ceilings covered with religious frescoes.**

PHOTOS BY SCOTT WYLAND  
Stars and Stripes



**Top: The altar for St. Guiseppe Moscati, an accomplished Neapolitan physician who treated the poor at no charge. He was believed to continue healing the sick after he died in 1927.**

# WORTHY OF PRAISE

Naples church contains wondrous art, and a saint

By SCOTT WYLAND  
Stars and Stripes

**T**he Church of Gesu Nuovo's austere facade, with its dark, diamond-shaped bricks, conceals an interior adorned with frescoes, ornate sculptures, vaulted ceilings and a shrine to a modern saint.

Originally built in 1470 as a royal palace for the Prince of Salerno, the church is in Gesu Nuovo Square near the Spire of the Immaculate Virgin, just outside the historic district. It is a semi-hidden treasure that's well worth the extra effort to find.

The church was finished around 1600, and most of its art was created during the ensuing three centuries.

Religious frescoes abound. On the church's front wall is "The Expulsion of Heliodorus from the Temple," a Baroque masterpiece painted by Francesco Solimena in 1725.

On the four pillars that support the ceiling dome are frescoes of the four evangelists by Giovanni Lanfranco. Inside the dome is the fresco "Life of the Virgin." The intricate detail of these murals and others in the church is astounding.

The main altar is surrounded by three bronze bas-reliefs. Above the altar are eight busts of saints who revered the Holy Eucharist.

Gesu Nuovo features seven chapels. One is the Chapel of the Visitation, which has an altar with a bronze urn containing the remains of St. Giuseppe Moscati, a Naples doctor and biochemistry professor who died in 1927 and was canonized by Pope John Paul II in 1987.

A bronze statue of Moscati, the first modern doctor to be sainted, stands next to the altar. His canonization miracle involved a young ironworker afflicted with leukemia. The worker's mother dreamed of a man in a white coat, whom she identified as Moscati in a photo. Her son's

## ON THE QT

### LOCATION

Address: Piazza del Gesu Nuovo 2, Naples, Italy  
Street parking and a nearby parking garage are available.

### TIMES

7 a.m.-1 p.m. and 4-8 p.m. Sunday through Wednesday; 7 a.m.-8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday

### COSTS

Free

### FOOD

There are many restaurants nearby.

### INFORMATION

Phone: +39 081 551 8613

— Scott Wyland

disease went into remission shortly afterward.

Many people make a pilgrimage to Moscati's altar. Some claim to have been healed of an ailment after their visit, while others say they were healed when Moscati's spirit came to them in a dream or vision. On the chapel's walls are hundreds of testimonials mounted on red plaques with silver castings that represent the body parts he healed.

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Twitter: @wylandstripes



**Above: A crucifix is enshrined in a wall at the church.**

## WEEKEND: TRAVEL

## Europe

## Lessons of Verdun live on in fields, museums

November 2018 marks the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I — “the war to end all wars,” which cost an estimated 40 million lives. While there are no more survivors to share their stories firsthand, WWI sites and memorials scattered across Europe, especially in France and Belgium, do their best to keep the devastation from fading from memory.

Perhaps the most powerful WWI sightseeing experience is located about 140 miles east of Paris at the battlefields of Verdun. It was here in 1916 that roughly 300,000 lives were lost in what’s known as the Battle of 300 Days and Nights. The longest single battle of World War I, it left the landscape barren for decades. Today, the traces of war are buried under thick forests, the soldiers’ vast network of communication trenches are overgrown — and haunted by their ghosts.

Plenty of rusty battle remnants and memorials are still accessible. A string of battlefields can be found along an eight-mile stretch of road outside the town of Verdun. From here, it’s possible to see (with a guided tour, rental car, shuttle bus or taxi) the most important sites and appreciate the horrific scale of the battle.

You can ride through the eerie mounds left by the incessant shelling, pause at melted-sugar-cube forts, ponder plaques marking spots where towns once existed and visit a vast cemetery.

To get a good overview, start at the Verdun Memorial Museum, which delivers gripping exhibits about the battle (with lots of information in English).

In one part of the museum, a battlefield replica — complete with mud, shells, trenches and WWI military equipment —

is visible through the glass floor. You can learn about medical help in the trenches and leaps in technology (from X-ray machines to machine guns with synchronized firing, which prevented bullets from hitting airplane propeller blades). I found out that the majority of injuries in this battle



Rick Steves

weren’t caused by machine-gun bullets, but by shrapnel. On both sides, most men died without ever seeing the enemy. Another key site for visitors is Fort Douaumont, just northeast of Verdun. Constructed in 1885, the fort was the most important stronghold among 38 hilltop fortifications that protected France from a German invasion. Built on top of and into the hillside, it ultimately served as a strategic command center for both Germany and France at various times. Soldiers were protected by a thick layer of sand (to muffle explosions) and a wall of concrete five to seven feet thick. Visitors today can experience these corridors, where soldiers were forced to live like moles, scurrying through two miles of cold, damp hallways.

Visitors can also climb to the bombed-out top of the fort to see the round, iron gun emplacements that could rise and revolve. The massive central gun turret was state of the art in 1905, antiquated in 1915 and essentially useless by the time the war arrived in 1916. From the perch at the top, looking out at fields leading to Germany and imagining the carnage in



Courtesy of Rick Steves

**The Douaumont Ossuary holds the remains of more than 130,000 unknown French and German soldiers from the WWI battle in Verdun, France.**

that horrible battle is unforgettable.

The nearby Douaumont Ossuary is the tomb of unknown French and German soldiers who perished in Verdun’s muddy trenches. In the years after the war, a local bishop wandered through fields of bones — the remains of about 130,000 unidentified soldiers. Concluding that they deserved a respectful final resting place, he began raising money for the project, which was officially inaugurated in 1927. The building has 46 granite vaults, each holding remains from different sectors of the battlefield. The unusual artillery-

shell-shaped tower and cross design of this building symbolizes war ... and peace (imagine a sword plunged into the ground up to its hilt).

For all that’s sobering to remember here, these Verdun memorials also offer visitors something beautiful to see: German, French and European flags wave alongside each other, as if to exclaim, “We learned, and we won’t do this again.”

Rick Steves (ricksteves.com) writes European travel guidebooks and hosts travel shows on public television and public radio. Email him at [rick@ricksteves.com](mailto:rick@ricksteves.com) and follow his blog on Facebook.

## TOP TRAVEL PICKS

## Parties kick off Austria’s ski season

The village of St. Anton am Arlberg, nestled in Austria’s Tyrolean Alps, is considered one of the birthplaces of downhill skiing. Consistently rated one of the country’s top resorts for its copious amounts of snow and extensive slopes, it’s also the biggest connected ski area in Austria. Through the weekend, it’s also the setting for special events to kick off the 2018/2019 ski season.

Following the launch of a new ski event titled “Catch Me If You Can,” in which 222 skiers descend pitch-black slopes with the aid of headlamps, things to do include tree testing of the latest ski and snowboard equipment from more than a dozen top makers, along with the AUDI Driving Experience, which offers the chance to drive a brand-new quattro model under the guidance of an expert instructor. On Dec. 1, Mel C and Anastasia will perform (tickets are 45 euros at the box office or 10 euros when purchased in conjunction with a two-day ski pass).

Online: [skiarlberg.at](http://skiarlberg.at).  
The resorts kick off their respective seasons in similar grand style. Events include a Ski-Opening in Schlading (cult rock band Die Toten Hosen and others perform) Dec. 1; a concert by Wanda in Obertauern on Dec. 1. Start Up 19 in Flachau (testing equipment, live acts and parties)



Karen Bradbury

Read more about things to do in the Europe Traveler blog: [stripes.com/blogs/europe-traveler](http://stripes.com/blogs/europe-traveler)

Dec. 7-9; a performance by the band Revolverheld in Pitztal on Dec. 8; World Cup Montafon in Silvretta-Montafon (ski cross and snowboard cross World Cup competitions and a concert by Wanda) Dec. 12-16; and the Rave on Snow in Saalbach-Hinterglemm (electronic music fest) Dec. 13-16.

Continuous improvement to infrastructure keeps Austria ahead as a ski destination. New in Ischgl this year is a six-seated ski lift capable of transporting up to 2,800 passengers per hour up 3,030 feet, the greatest elevation gain of any six-seated chairlift in the world. Its heated, extra-wide seats help skiers arrive refreshed and ready for their next challenge. Zillertal has three new lifts and an attraction called the Ski Movie Run, in which an individual’s skiing performance is filmed, timed and made avail-

able for free download.

In terms of ticketing, Oetztal’s new Super Skipass combines 220 miles of slopes, 90 lifts and six ski areas into a single ski pass, available for purchase for periods between three and 14 days. Ski Amade makes waiting in line a thing of the past with its ticketing option for the purchase of a ski pass by mobile phone.

Revamped lodgings include the newly refurbished Hotel Mooshaus in Kuehtal, which offers extensive spa facilities and the highest infinity pool of the Alps. It’s also a ski-in, ski-out facility. In Salzburg, the Weisses Kreuz is a 16th-century historical townhouse that’s been painstakingly restored and equipped with modern comforts. Combine your city stay with the Salzburg Super Ski Card, a pass providing access to 23 regions and 1,700 miles of slopes, and you’ve got the best of all worlds.

## Essen’s Motor Show displays sport vehicles

The Essen Motor Show is widely considered Europe’s leading fair for sport vehicles. More than 500 exhibitors are set to take part in its 51st edition, which runs Dec. 1-9 this year.

The long-running fair concentrates on four major thematic areas: motor sports, tuning, classic cars and motorcycles. Fans of production sports cars and motorsports will find much to love, as Mercedes, Nissan,



Courtesy of Essen Motor Show 2018

**A retrofitted DeLorean DMC-12 made to look like the one in the “Back to the Future” trilogy will be among the sporty autos at the PSF Essen Motor Show on Dec. 1-9 at Messe Essen in Germany.**

Porsche, Renault and Skoda, along with a host of other brands, have a presence here, and the lineup of vehicles typically includes numerous premieres. The Nuerburg racing venue has representatives on hand, as do many companies offering lifestyle products, experiences and accessories. Around 160 private owners present their vehicles in the tuningXperience show.

Exhibits serve to elicit envious glances include one of classic and newer model convertibles from Aston Martin, Chevrolet, Ferrari, Maserati, Mercedes-Benz and Porsche, among others. The Mercedes-Benz 190 SL from 1956 will make a startling contrast to today’s state-of-the-art

vehicles such as the Chevrolet Corvette Z06.

Cars identical to those that played leading roles in films can be seen in the Classic & Prestige Salon, including a replica of the DeLorean from the “Back to the Future” films, a pair of cars such as those driven through “Jurassic Park,” K.I.T.T. from the “Knight Rider” TV series, and a reconstruction of the “Ecto 1” vehicle of “Ghostbusters” fame.

The fair is open 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 9 a.m. on weekends. Entry costs 16 euros adults, 13 euros for ages 8-16, and is free for those 7 and under. Discounted entry after 3 p.m.

Online: [essen-motorschow.de](http://essen-motorschow.de)



## WEEKEND: FOOD &amp; DINING

## Europe



PHOTOS BY KENT HARRIS/Stars and Stripes

The Roadhouse restaurant near Conegliano, Italy, is located in a shopping center off the SS-13, about a 30-minute drive from Aviano Air Base.

## After Hours: Italy

By KENT HARRIS  
Stars and Stripes

I had dined at the Roadhouse chain of restaurants before while visiting the Tiare shopping mall near Villesse just a few miles from the Italian border with Slovenia.

And I wrote a review of it (tinyurl.com/yae5geze) for Stars and Stripes.

But since then, a new location has opened much closer to Aviano Air Base. So I checked it out to see if the food and service is standard at locations throughout the chain.

At least in this case, the answer is yes, which is good news for Americans looking to get away from Italian food and get a taste of home — especially if your home tastes like large chunks of red meat.

There's no pasta or pizza on the menu. There are more than a dozen choices involving steak or at least beef. Add in a half dozen choices for hamburgers and a handful of sandwich options.

Ribs go for 14.90 euros — you might want to add some more sauce to them — and wings for 10.90 euros. On Sundays, 10 euros gets you all you can eat of either.

Three salads (all with plenty of meat) offer an alternative for those who want something green as part of their meals. And having those might lead you to believe, incorrectly, that indulging in an array of decadent dessert options is still OK health-wise.

Diners going for meat can easily add an extra side dish, such as potatoes or vegetables, for a few euros more.

There's a separate menu for kids, and children are given colored pencils and paper to entertain them. There's also a room with projected images where kids can run around, or just throw themselves on the floor.

Another positive is that diners don't have to remember which days of the week Roadhouse is open. It's open for lunch and dinner without any regularly scheduled closing times.

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One of the sandwich options is the Double Pork. It features a pretzel-like bun, two pork patties, bacon, arugula, onions and salsa. A baked potato is available as a side.



The interior of the Roadhouse restaurant near Conegliano, Italy, is similar to others in the chain.

## ROADHOUSE

**Address:** Via Villa Liccer 1, San Fior, Italy  
**Directions:** From Aviano, follow the SS-13 toward Conegliano. The restaurant is on the left in a new shopping center. Turn left at two roundabouts to enter the center.  
**Dress:** Casual  
**Menu:** In Italian, with plenty of English sprinkled in (much of staff speaks at

least some English).  
**Food:** Italian interpretation of American diner/steakhouse food. Menu (with prices and to-go options) listed extensively on the website. All-you-can-eat ribs and wings on Sundays.  
**Hours:** Open for lunch and dinner daily.  
**Phone:** 0438-403880  
**Online:** roadhouse.it  
— Kent Harris

## Uncommon fruits and what to do with them

By CASEY SEIDENBERG  
Special to The Washington Post

Grocery shopping with my children can be a game of dodgeball as they try to sneak in things I prefer not to buy, but on a recent trip to the grocery store, my second-grader picked up a dragon fruit and asked me what it was. She then dove for a lychee, then a persimmon, then examined several other fruits uncommon to many Americans.

We bought several often-overlooked fruits and brought them home as an experiment.

I knew what to do with a persimmon, as I have sliced them on a cheese plate and mashed them for baby food. We have blended dragon fruit into our smoothies, and star fruit is always a hit because the shape is so appealing to kids. Yet I have to admit, the lychee and the kiwano melon were going to nudge me right out of my comfort zone.

My daughter and I studied each, delving into their unique flavors, their unexpected usages and their undeniable nutrition. That night, she played a game with her teenage brothers, asking them to match each quirky-looking fruit to its fun facts. They never would have played that game with me, but they generously indulged her, and our experiment went down as a win.

## Persimmon

**Fun facts:**

The national fruit of Japan (though it originated in China), persimmons are in season from September through December, making them regulars in holiday cooking. During the fall harvest, some people attempt to predict upcoming winter weather by peering at the pattern inside persimmon seeds. There are two types of persimmons: the hachiya, which is shaped like an acorn and is bitter before ripening, and the fuyu, which is sweet, round and usually seedless.

**Nutrition:**

One persimmon provides 55 percent of the recommended daily vitamin A, 21 percent of the recommended daily vitamin C, fiber, B vitamins, other minerals such as manganese, copper and phosphorus, and phytonutrients, antioxidants and flavonoids.

**Ways to serve:**

Chop the crisp, sweet flesh, eat like an apple (peeling is optional), make a mozzarella (or any kind of cheese) and persimmon sandwich, top a bowl of ice cream, add to salads, mash into baby food, add color to a cheese plate, bake in muffins or make into a chutney.

## Star fruit (carambola)

**Fun facts:**

When cut crosswise, this fruit looks like a star, hence its name. Star fruit, which is native to parts of Southeast Asia, tastes similar to a grape. The larger varieties tend to be sweeter, and the entire fruit is edible, skin and all. Star fruit are ripe when they

are vibrant yellow. The few seeds are edible or can be discarded.

**Nutrition:**

One star fruit provides 76 percent of the recommended daily vitamin C, in addition to fiber, potassium, copper and B vitamins.

**Ways to serve:**

Slice star fruit for a snack or add to a lunch box, blend into smoothies, chop for chutney or salsa, add color and interest to a fruit salad, or give sweetness and appeal to leafy green salads.

## Dragon fruit (pitaya)

**Fun facts:**

Dragon fruit, believed to be native to Central America, are technically part of the cactus species, yet look like a smaller, softer, pinker pineapple. This fruit is mildly sweet, described by my daughter as a mix of a kiwi and watermelon. It is ripe when firm but not hard. The pink-fleshed fruits tend to be higher in nutrients and a bit sweeter than white-fleshed ones.

**Nutrition:**

One dragon fruit provides phytonutrients, antioxidants and flavonoids, B vitamins, 15 percent of the daily recommended vitamin C, iron and calcium.

**Ways to serve:**

Slice lengthwise, then quarter, and peel off and discard the skin. You can eat the black seeds along with the flesh. Shape with a melon baller for a fruit salad.

## Lychee (litchi)

**Fun facts:**

These fruits, which originated in southern China, have a tough, bumpy skin that is easily peeled to reveal a white fleshy fruit much like a peeled grape. Lychee fruits have one inedible seed.

**Nutrition:**

One half-cup of the fruit provides more than 100 percent of the daily recommended vitamin C, plus fiber, antioxidants, flavonoids, high levels of B vitamins, potassium and phosphorus. Litchi can be an allergen.

**Ways to serve:**

Chop into a salad, or use to flavor drinks such as iced tea or margaritas.

## Kiwano (horned melon)

**Fun facts:**

When ripe, this spiky fruit, native to Africa, is bright orange on the outside. On the inside, it is slimy green, much like a kiwi — but with a taste more similar to a banana with a hint of cucumber. It appeals to kids because of its alien appearance. To eat, cut it in half and scoop out the middle. The seeds are edible like cucumber seeds, as is the skin. Do not refrigerate.

**Nutrition:**

A cup of kiwano melon has almost as much protein as one tablespoon of peanut butter, plus vitamin C, iron and potassium.

**Ways to serve:**

Toss on salads or blend and add to smoothies, salad dressings and drinks.

## WEEKEND: TRAVEL

## Europe

# Adventure base: Arctic



Niehku Mountain Villa

## Ski beneath the midnight sun on the 68th parallel

BY JEN MURPHY  
Bloomberg

**T**he wild terrain of the Arctic used to be the playground of explorers. But a new crop of high-end heli-ski lodges is turning it into the next frontier for skiers in search of virgin powder and unlimited runs, shared only with resident polar bears and reindeer.

If skiing under the midnight sun feels like a new level in bragging rights, the ambitious Niehku Mountain Villa — with 14 rooms on the border of Norway and Sweden — is a whole different game. Located on the 68th parallel, just north of the Arctic Circle, the lodge is reachable by a 90-minute flight from Stockholm to Kiruna followed by a 90-minute drive along a beautiful, desolate road.

Few adventure bases like it exist: The only comparable options are Deplar Farm in Iceland (which requires private buyouts) and Weber Arctic's heli-ski operation on Canada's Baffin Island (where guests stay in a low-frills, community-run hotel). But when it opens this March for its first official season — Arctic skiing is best in the spring — Niehku will aim to raise the bar with a 500-bottle wine cellar, top-of-the-line ski gear including Salomon freeride skis, and multicourse lavacore meals.

The tiny hamlet of Riksgransen — a simple cluster of barnlike buildings straddling the Swedish and Norwegian



PHOTOS BY DAVID CARLIER/Niehku Mountain Villa

Located just north of the Arctic Circle, Niehku Mountain Villa is reachable by a 90-minute flight from Stockholm to Kiruna followed by a 90-minute drive. Once on the mountain, skiers are sent off in groups of five, each with a dedicated guide.

border, a full 125 miles north of the Arctic Circle — feels like a village pulled from Scandinavian mythology. It was established more than a century ago as a customs stop, after the two countries' navies established a railway line hauling iron ore from the Swedish mines to the Norwegian coast.

Whispers spread of the surrounding mountains, and the first ski lift was installed in 1954; even though it would take three decades to connect the area to Stockholm by road, an unlikely ski scene emerged. Plenty of enthusiasts,

it turned out, were willing to make the long train journey from the Lapland town of Kiruna to ski here; the terrain rivals Kamchatka and the Himalayas in terms of remoteness and variety, with a mix of high-altitude, wide-open powder runs and adrenaline-pumping steeps that can't be found anywhere else.

Today, Riksgransen features prominently in extreme ski and snowboard films; it's a stomping ground for freeride ski and snowboard pioneers. And it's also the preferred place of Johan "Jossi" Lindblom and Patrik "Strumpan" Stromsten,

## 'Niehku celebrates the simple things in life.'

Johan "Jossi" Lindblom  
co-owner, Niehku Mountain Villa

Swedish friends and skiing die-hards who now own and manage Niehku. Of all the places Lindblom had skied in his years as a mountain guide, from Alaska to the Caucasus Mountains and a decade-plus in Chamonix Valley, he maintains that the best terrain in the world is right in his own backyard.

Niehku is the word the indigenous Northern Sami people of Europe's Arctic use for "dream" — fitting, since Lindblom and Stromsten considered its existence a pipe dream. For years over drinks they'd joke about what their dream ski lodge would look like; then suddenly, in 2012, it became viable when one of Lindblom's clients, a Gothenburg-based real estate mogul, proposed the friends build and run a heli-ski lodge that he would finance.

When it opens in March, Niehku will embody the friends' passions: skiing, great food and wine, cool design, and music. (Stromsten is a former ski racer who has twice been named Sweden's top sommelier, and the pair once did a stint in a rock band called the National Borderliners.)

The 14 rooms — built into a train line roundhouse from the early 1900s — merge local materials with highbrow comforts. There are oak floors and slate walls sourced from Alta, Norway; custom stone ceramics in the showers; and blueprints of the original building hung above the plush Hastens beds.

Days will begin and end with meals by

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

## FROM PAGE 30

Stromsten's wife, who is also a sommelier and runs her own successful restaurant, Krakas Korg, on the island of Gotland. The owners say it'll be "skiers' food," but this is definitely not the lunch-tray chili or fancy fondue most skiers are used to. Homemade pastries, muesli and yogurt, and eggs made to order provide fuel through the morning. Lunch — packed picnic-style into the back of a helicopter — might be a thermos of reindeer stew and freshly baked breads paired with organic beers from small Swedish breweries. In the evenings, guests sit down to a multicourse meal that might include Swedish caviar with blackened leek and herb oil paired with a 2011 Vilmart & Cie Grand Celler Champagne and leg of reindeer from Kiruna with lingonberry sauce chanterelles paired with a 2009 Brunello di Montalcino Castello di Argiano Sesti.

(Perhaps unsurprisingly considering Stromsten's background, the wine cellar is stocked with 500 premium labels including American icons like Harlan Estate, Sine Qua Non, and Colgin-along with some 60 bottles of Domaine de la Romanee Conti.)

All that food is well-earned: With more than 1 million acres of terrain at Niehku's doorstep, skiers can collect more than 26,240 vertical feet in a day, spread across a whopping 60 peaks. (There is one permanent resort there, with six lifts.)

Helicopters are ready to go at 9 a.m. and unlike in the Alps, where strict rules limit the number of runs from designated landing spots, here you can basically ski anywhere and everywhere until your legs give out.

The only thing stopping you, jokes Lindblom, is the occasional herd of reindeer blocking a track. Come May and June, you can even go back out after dinner and ski powder in the pink midnight sun.

Just because the operation focuses on heli-skiing doesn't mean it's restricted to expert skiers. "The variation of terrain and the size of the area ensures that everyone who comes to us gets what they want, regardless of their level and experience," says Lindblom. "There's endless enjoyable cruising for the common skier, but also steep faces and technical runs for the expert."

Ultimately that's what makes Niehku special: its wide appeal. A lot of lodges have prime locations and over-the-top amenities, but few have owners who not only live and breathe the skiing but can also talk cult cabarets while leading you down untracked powder runs.

"Niehku celebrates the simple things in life," says Lindblom. "We love skiing, but at day's end we also value the chance to eat and drink well, have a good sauna and a massage, read a book in the lounge in front of the fire."

Stays at Niehku cost from \$4,640 per person for three days and cover semi-private heli-skiing, meals, accommodations, and use of the sauna.

Alcohol, massages, and down-day activities such as dog sledding, ice fishing, and snowmobiling cost extra.

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## GERMANY

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# HOTEL DIRECTORY

## GERMANY

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## WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

## Pacific

# Night lights

Japan's winter illuminations promise holiday excitement for all



A couple enjoys the scenery at the Sapporo White Illumination.

PHOTOS BY SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

BY SETH ROBSON AND KAT BOUZA

Stars and Stripes

There's electricity in the air during the Christmas season in Japan.

Santa's little helpers have been at work stringing lightbulbs around the city of Sapporo on Japan's northernmost island of Hokkaido — and many more will light up other Japanese cities in the leadup to the end-of-the-year holidays.

Although winter illuminations are now commonplace all across Japan, the Sapporo White Illumination was the country's first Christmas illumination when it began in 1981. That first illumination, according to Sapporo mayor Katsuhiko Akimoto, was created using about 1,000 bulbs — a far cry from the 520,000 lights in this year's White Illumination.

Akimoto was part of a group of a dozen or so local leaders who helped kick off this year's festivities by turning on the illumination's lights at Sapporo's Odori Park on Nov. 22.

Japanese officials are promoting the use of sustainable energy to power LED Christmas lights this year — but it's clear that this nuclear-powered nation isn't short of electricity, or shy about showing it off.

Sapporo's White Illumination includes five distinct color-themed areas, referred to as "Districts." For example, there's a love-themed display near the Sapporo TV tower called the "Red District." In the aptly named "Green District," you might run into the Grinch himself.

Visitors can also stop by the Munich Christmas Market, which includes 34 stalls operated by vendors from Germany, Russia, Austria and Lithuania.

It's a little weird to see people selling T-shirts with images of Russian President Vladimir Putin on Hokkaido, given Japan and Russia's territorial dispute over tiny islands known as the Northern Territories, located off the island's northern coast. But having a German-style Christmas market in Sapporo makes sense, as Munich

and Sapporo have been sister cities since the 1972 Sapporo Winter Olympics.

While it might be prudent to put on a light sweater before strolling among the illuminations in Tokyo, in Sapporo it's best to bundle up as warmly as possible. Local schoolgirls are tough enough to wander through the snow in short skirts — but if you're from out of town, several

thermal layers and down jacket will help you focus on the lights rather than the cold.

If you can't make it up to Sapporo for the festivities, there's plenty of illumination action happening elsewhere in the country through the beginning of the new year.

Tokyo Prefecture is one of the most popular locations in Japan to visit for illuminations, with more than 20 major illuminations planned for the winter season.

One of the most popular illuminations in Tokyo is the Tokyo Midtown Illumination, which is famous for its annual Starlight Garden installation featuring a whopping 190,000 LED bulbs, bubbles and an intergalactic-themed light show. The illumination, which runs through Dec. 25, is particularly crowded on Christmas Eve, when many young couples descend upon the Midtown neighborhood to spend a romantic evening together.

Tokyo Dome City's annual illumination is well known for its extravagant decorations built around a theme, which changes yearly. This winter's display, titled "Edo Elegance Japanese Beauty," is inspired by traditional Japanese handicrafts and features everything from origami cranes to traditional umbrellas handmade in Gifu Prefecture. The display runs through Feb. 17, several weeks after most other illuminations finish.

Other popular illuminations include:

- The Otomesando Illumination (through Dec. 25), in which the trees lining the streets of the upscale shopping district are covered in golden lights.

- Shibuya Ao no Dokutsu (through Dec. 31), or the "Blue Cavern," which transforms a road leading into Yoyogi Park into a magical forest of blue trees.

- The Yomiuri Land Jewellumination (through Feb. 17), which even illuminates the theme park's attractions in a spectacle that rivals that of Tokyo Disneyland's Christmas display.

In addition to the large-scale displays, many smaller Tokyo neighborhoods also host low-key illuminations, with most of the action centered around train stations or shopping areas. If you want to avoid the crowds or have little ones in tow, these illuminations are a great substitute for the more hectic larger events.

Can't make it to Tokyo? Don't worry — there's plenty of other illuminations to choose from, including some near American military bases.

Those stationed at United States Fleet Activities Yokosuka should head to nearby Yokohama to check out Cosmoworld's Winter Fantasy Illumination, which begins Dec. 1 and runs through the end of February.

A few minutes from Naval Air Facility Atsugi at Atsugi Station is the Atsugi Brilliant Story Illumination, a low-key display that's perfect for families. This year's event is titled "Fireworks in Winter" and runs through Feb. 14.

There's even illumination action in the remote northern prefecture of Aomori, with the Misawa Phantasia Illumination taking over the city's Nakayoshi Park through Jan. 14. The event, which is located less than 10 minutes from Misawa Air Base, boasts a pop-up bar serving beer and other snacks on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays through Dec. 15.

Even if you're far from family this year, illuminations make it easy to get into the holiday spirit. But don't wait — these dazzling displays won't be around for long.

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Visitors to Sapporo's White Illumination can buy Russian nesting dolls at a Munich-inspired Christmas market.



A decorated tree makes Sapporo's Odori Park festive.



In the aptly named "Green District" at Sapporo's White Illumination, you might run into the Grinch himself.

## WEEKEND: FOOD &amp; DINING

## Pacific

## After Hours: Korea

By KIM GAMEL  
Stars and Stripes

Foreigners lacking in chopstick skills but too embarrassed to ask for a fork will be relieved when they sit down at Hoejen Hwa, a Korean barbecue restaurant located near Camp Humphreys, just a few blocks down the main street leading from the base's Anjeung-ri access gate.

Unlike other restaurants offering local fare, Hoejen Hwa offers forks, along with traditional Korean metal chopsticks, conveniently located in drawers at the tables.

Commonly known as “beef and leaf” due to the large leaves of lettuce that accompany the meat for making wraps, Korean barbecue is one of the most famous forms of Korean cuisine among foreigners. Different cuts of meat, including pork and chicken, are grilled tableside and served with an accompaniment of side dishes, called *banchan*. In some restaurants popular with the younger set, the current Korean barbecue trend throws cheese fondue into the mix — making for a unique, Instagram-worthy dining experience.

Hoejen Hwa Hwa is one of several restaurants outside Camp Humphreys that caters to the growing American cuisine in the largely rural area. The base has become the main headquarters for the U.S. military in South Korea as part of a long-delayed plan to relocate troops south of Seoul.

The restaurant is brightly lit, with two floors that are often packed and lively in the evenings. Don't be surprised if you're met with a wait, especially on weekends. Think of the restaurant's popularity as a sure sign that the food served up at Hoejen Hwa Hwa is indeed good — although diners should be prepared to cook it themselves on the tabletop grill and not expect much help from the busy wait staff.

My colleagues and I were lucky to get a table right after on a recent Thursday. We ordered the restaurant's “Special Set,” which includes three types of beef ribs, or *galbi* in Korean, and a mildly spiced chicken for 50,000 won (about \$45). It was plenty for four people.

Other dishes are available to order individually include pork belly (13,000 won), beef bulgogi (9,500 won) and various noodle and soup dishes ranging in price from 2,000-6,000 won.

The usual selection of *banchan* are laid out on the table in small portions at the start of the meal — but you can get more at a self-service buffet located at the front of the restaurant.

Somewhat surprisingly, the *banchan* appeared oriented toward an American clientele, with dishes such as noodles, potato salad and coleslaw. I had to ask for kimchi — a pickle-like dish consisting of spicy fermented cabbage and other vegetables that's a signature staple in Korean cuisine and a common offering at restaurants.

The wait staff spoke English and were friendly, even bringing several side dishes to the table with-



Plenty of dishes are available to order individually at Hoejen Hwa Hwa, including pork belly (13,000 won), beef bulgogi (9,500 won) and various noodle and soup dishes ranging in price from 2,000-6,000 won. The menu is partially in English.



The usual selection of *banchan*, or side dishes, is laid out on the table in small portions at the start of the meal. You can get more at this self-service buffet located at the front of the restaurant.

out complaint before finally informing me about the self-service buffet, which I had missed.

The meal itself was a satisfying one, with the well-seasoned and tender *galbi* giving a slightly spicy kick that complemented the rest of the food nicely.

The menu, available in Korean and English, included entertaining descriptions explaining that the boneless beef *galbi* has “better chewing taste than the sirloin” with the texture described as “great!” The chicken is praised as being “so tender that people say is [sic] not chicken but only the ones who have tried this knows the secret.”

I tried the chicken (using chopsticks) and am still not sure what the secret of the dish is, or what the menu's claim means — but it did form part of an overall tasty meal.

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PHOTOS BY KIM GAMEL/Stars and Stripes

Hoejen Hwa Hwa's “Special Set” can easily feed a family of four and includes three types of beef ribs and a mildly spiced chicken for 50,000 won, about \$45.

## HOEJEN HWA HWA

**Location:** 153-18 Anjeong-ri, Paengseong-eup, Pyeongtaek, Gyeonggi-do, South Korea  
**Directions:** From Camp Humphreys, exit through the Anjeung-ri access gate and walk or drive up the main street of the same name. The restaurant will be on your left. Street-side parking is also available.

**Hours:** Open daily from 10 a.m. to 11:30 p.m., except some holidays.

**Prices:** Dishes range from 9,000-62,000 won (or about \$8

to \$55), with the most expensive item being a kilogram (2.2 pounds) of boneless beef *galbi*. A variety of beverages, including beer, soju, makgeolli and soda, are also available for 2,000 to 12,000 won.

**Dress:** Casual  
**Information:** To make reservations, call 031-618-8592. English-speaking staff is available.

**Online:** facebook.com/pages/Hoejen-Hwa-Hwa/306942569328918

— Kim Gamel

## Common food preservatives aren't worth worrying about

By TAMAR HASPEL  
Special to The Washington Post

In October, pasta maker Barilla got hit with a class-action lawsuit over its jarred pasta sauces. The suit is over the “no preservatives” claim on the label. On the ingredient list, though, is citric acid, which can be used as a preservative.

Sigh. Where do I begin?

How about with the safety of preservatives in general, which is something consumers are very concerned about. One recent consumer poll found that “no preservatives” is one of the top three claims driving purchasing. (The other two are “no artificial ingredients” and “locally produced.”)

What consumers say and what they do are often two different things, but a poll does give us some idea about priorities.

People want to avoid preservatives.

When I have a question about safety of an ingredient, I often turn to the Center for Science in the Public Interest, which has been carefully watching safety research for decades. They're a go-to source for me because, when I disagree with them (which I have, recently over Splenda), I think they're overcautious, and I prefer a source that errs on the side of caution than the reverse. When they tell you something's safe, you can be confident.

Lisa Jefferts, senior scientist at CSPI, ran down the most common preservatives for me. Here's her list. (If you want the full names of the abbreviated items, they're easily found):

- Citric acid/sodium citrate
- Potassium sorbate/sorbic acid
- Sodium benzoate/benzoic acid/potas-

sium benzoate

- Ascorbic acid (vitamin C)
- Lactic acid
- Sodium nitrite/sodium nitrate
- Sodium diacetate
- EDTA
- Sodium erythorbate/erythorbic acid
- Sulfur dioxide/sulfites
- Calcium propionate

Of those, only one — sodium nitrite/nitrate, which is used in bacon and other cured meats — is classified as “avoid” (in CSPI's safe/caution/avoid taxonomy). Several other, less common preservatives are also “avoid” (BHA, Propyl Gallate, TBHQ). Most preservatives, though, are safe, and the risk of preservatives as a group is small. It's also worth noting that salt, sugar and some spices can act as preservatives, but those aren't the ones people object to.

Oh, and citric acid, the one Barilla is being sued for? Perfectly safe. It occurs naturally in citrus fruits, although for the past hundred years it's been made at industrial scale by using a mold (which is then filtered out).

Self-stuffed food is a boon to the human race, and one of the reasons many fewer of us go hungry in the modern world.

If you're eating a diet high in processed foods, then you're eating more preservatives, but the problem isn't the preservatives — it's that you're eating a diet high in processed foods.

And the issue with processed foods is less what's in them than what's been stripped out of them.

If you're worried about risk, worry about texting and driving. Worry about smoking. Worry about obesity. But don't worry about preservatives.



## WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE



Google Home

# AT YOUR COMMAND

Buying a smart speaker today is a lot like choosing a smartphone a decade ago. Here's how to find your tribe

By GEOFFREY A. FOWLER  
*The Washington Post*



Apple HomePod



Amazon Echo

**S**ure, you could choose a smart speaker based on sound or price. The go-to gadget gift of the season is available from Amazon, Apple and Google with better acoustics, new touch screens and deep holiday discounts.

But you're not just buying a talking jukebox. Alexa, Siri and Google Assistant also want to adjust the thermostat, fill your picture frame or even microwave your popcorn. Each artificial intelligence assistant has its own ways of running a home. You're choosing which tribe is yours.

I call it a tribe because each has a distinct culture — and demands loyalty. This decision will shape how you get information, what appliances you purchase, where you shop and how you protect your privacy. One in 10 Americans plans to buy a smart speaker this year, according to the Consumer Technology Association. And Amazon says its Echo Dot is the best-selling speaker ever.

The last time we had to choose a tech tribe like this was when smartphones arrived. Did you go iPhone, Android, or cling to a Blackberry? A decade later, it's increasingly hard to fathom switching between iPhone and Android. (A recent Match.com survey found that iPhone and Android people don't even like dating one another.) Now imagine how hard it will be to change when you've literally wired stuff into your walls.

In my test lab — I mean, living room — an Amazon Echo, Google Home and Apple HomePod sit side by side, and the voice AIs battle it out to run my home like genies in high-tech bottles. Here's the shorthand I've learned: Alexa is for accessibility, Google Assistant is for brainpower. And Siri is for security.

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# WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE

Smart speakers are building the smart home that you never knew you needed. Inside the audio equipment, they're home hub computers that work alongside smartphone apps to connect and control disparate devices and services. Now with a speaker and the right connected gizmo, you can walk into a room and turn on the lights without touching a button. Or control the TV without a remote.

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Amazon's aggressive expansion makes Alexa the one I recommend, and use, the most. Google's Assistant is coming from behind, matching feature by feature — and Siri, the original voice assistant, feels held back by Apple's focus on privacy and its software shortcomings. (Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos owns The Washington Post, but I review all tech with the same critical eye.)

Smart speakers are building the smart home that you never knew you needed. Inside the audio equipment, they're home hub computers that work alongside smartphone apps to connect and control disparate devices and services. Now with a speaker and the right connected gizmo, you can walk into a room and turn on the lights without touching a button. Or control the TV without a remote. Amazon even sells an Alexa-operated microwave that cooks, tracks and reorders popcorn.

But home assistants can also be Trojan horses for a specific set of devices and services that favor one company over another.

My buddy Matt recently asked me to help him pick speakers and appliances for a big remodel. He loves the Google Assistant on his Android phone, so selecting his tribe should be easy, right? Hardly: He wanted to put Sonos speakers all around the house, but they take voice commands directly via Alexa. (Sonos says Google Assistant support is coming, though it's been promising that for a year.)

Figuring out which connected doodads are compatible can be like solving a 10,000-piece puzzle. The best smart home gadgets (like Lutron Caseta and Philips Hue lights) work across all three tribes, but sometimes alliances and technical concerns make appliance makers take sides.

Each AI has its limitations. They're not all equally skilled at understanding accents — Southerners are misunderstood more with Google and Midwesterners with Alexa. The price of ownership with some is letting a company surveil what goes on in your house. You can try, like me, to live with more than one, but you're left with a patchwork that won't win you any favors with family.

How do you find your AI tribe? Here's how I differentiate them.

## Alexa

**Supported smart home devices:** More than 20,000

**Who loves it:** Families who buy lots through Amazon and experiment with new gizmos.

**The good:** Alexa knows how to operate the most stuff, thanks to Amazon's superior dealmaking. The only connected things it can't run in my house are the app-operated garage door and some facets of my TV. Amazon also has been successful at spawning new connected gadgets: Alexa's voice and microphone are built into more than 100 non-Alexa devices. And Amazon recently announced plans to offer appliance makers a chip that lets Alexa users voice command inexpensive everyday things, from wall plugs to fans. Alexa has also mastered some of the little details of home life. It will confirm a request to turn off the lights without re-



PHOTOS BY JOHN BRECHER/For The Washington Post

**With an Echo device (not included), the AmazonBasics Microwave takes commands from Alexa, and even keeps track of your popcorn supplies.**

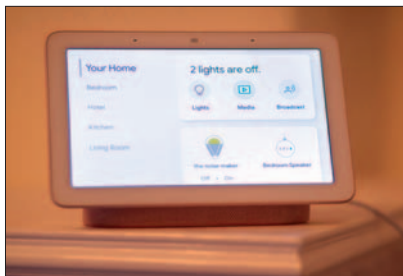
peating your command — super helpful when someone nearby is napping.

**The bad:** Alexa grows smarter by the week, but it can be a stickler about using specific syntax. It also has the weakest relationship with your phone. Amazon has bolstered a companion Alexa app for phones, making it better for communicating and setting up smart home routines, but I still find it the most confusing of the lot.

Amazon doesn't always show the highest concern for our privacy. This spring, when Alexa inadvertently recorded a family's

private conversations and sent it to a contact, Amazon's response boiled down to 'whoopie.' And it records and keeps every conversation you have with the AI — including every bag of popcorn it microwaves. (Amazon says it doesn't use our queries to sell us stuff beyond making recommendations based on song and product searches.)

Some love Alexa's ability to order products by voice. But as long as Alexa runs your house, you'll always be stuck buying those goods from Amazon. (That microwave will only ever order popcorn from Amazon.)



The new Google Home Hub serves as a smart speaker, smart home control center and family photo frame.

## Google Assistant

**Supported smart home devices:** More than 10,000

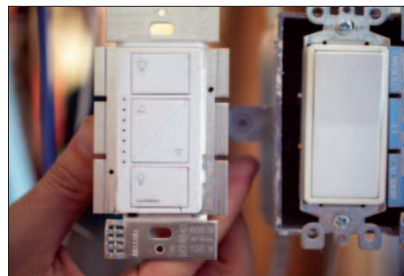
**Who loves it:** People who are deep into Google's services.

**The good:** Google Assistant comes the closest to having a conversation with an actual human helper: You don't have to use exact language to make things happen or get useful answers. Its intelligence can also be delightfully personal: It's pretty good at differentiating the voices of family members. And on the new Home Hub device with a screen, Assistant curates a highlights-only show from your Google Photos collection.

The Assistant doesn't particularly care what kind of phone you use — its simple companion apps work on iOS and Android.

And Google is neck and neck with Alexa on many of the nuances: Night mode reduces the volume of answers at night, and it can even require Junior to say "pretty please." **The bad:** As a relative newcomer to the smart home, Google has been catching up fast. But in my house, it still can't fully control my Ring doorbell or send music to my Sonos speakers. And I'm not convinced that Google has Amazon's negotiating sway, or the influence to bring the next generation of connected things online.

The bigger problem is privacy. Google's endgame is always getting you to spend more time with its services, so it can gather more data to target ads at you. Like Alexa, Google Assistant keeps a recording of all your queries — every time you ask it to turn off the lights. Google treats this kind of like your Web search history, and uses it to target ads elsewhere. (Thankfully, it still keeps data from its Nest thermostat and home security division separate.) The potential upside is that when Google discovers your habits in all that data, it might be able to better automate your home — like what time all the lights should be off.



Lutron Caseta connected light switches work with Siri smart homes.

## Siri

**Supported smart home devices:** Hundreds

**Who loves it:** Privacy buffs and all-Apple households.

**The good:** Apple means business on security and privacy. Any device that wants to connect to HomeKit, its smart home software that works with Siri on the HomePod and iPhone, requires special encryption.

What's more, your data is not attached to a personal profile, which aside from protecting your privacy also means that Apple is not using your home activity to sell or advertise things. (While other smart speakers keep recordings and transcriptions of what you say, Siri controls devices by making a request to its system through a random identifier, which cannot be tied to specific user.)

And Apple is pretty good at keeping the smart home simple. Setting up a smart home device is mostly just scanning a special code. Even creating routines, in which multiple accessories work in combination with a single command, is easier in the Siri's companion Home app than with competitors.

**The bad:** You have to live in an all-Apple device world to reap these benefits. Siri's a pretty good DJ, but only if you subscribe to Apple Music. You're stuck with the HomePod as the one-size-fits-all smart speaker, and Siri still isn't as competent as her AI competitors.

And Apple's security-first approach has kept too many appliance makers from joining its ecosystem. Sure, it's quality not quantity, but Siri still can't interact with my Nest thermostat or Ring doorbell, just to name two. Apple did recently loosen up a tad: starting with Belkin Wemo's Mini Smart Plug and Dimmer, it no longer requires special hardware for authentication — that can now happen via software. The move should make it simpler to make new products Siri compatible, and allow it access to existing ones.

## WEEKEND: MUSIC



# The kids are alright

Inspired by the classics, Greta Van Fleet is Generation Z's first major rock band

By GLENN GAMBOA  
*Newsday*

**G**reta Van Fleet enjoys making music its members like — and it shows.

Generation Z's first major rock band taps into the same spirit of fun and experimentation that the classic rockers of the '60s like Led Zeppelin and Cream had, the love of playing loud and fast because they can.

"When we're in the studio, we're not thinking about what the people will like," says bassist/keyboardist Sam Kiszka, calling from a tour stop in Birmingham, England. "We make music for ourselves, honestly. We sculpt the album to be the way we want it to be rather than thinking, 'Well, this might be catchy' or

"This may be more effective to grab listeners.' When we released the album, we thought, 'Well, here goes nothing.'"

Greta Van Fleet's debut, "Anthem of the Peaceful Army," (Lava/Republic) turned out to be much more than the Michigan rockers expected. It topped the rock charts when it was released in October and reached No. 3 on the overall albums charts, while the single "When the Curtain Falls" became the band's third No. 1 on the rock charts. And the buzz around the quartet — 19-year-old Kiszka; his 22-year-old brothers, singer Josh and guitarist Jake; and 19-year-old drummer Danny Wagner — continues to grow.

"The high point of this year of very high and very low extremes was releasing the album and seeing the response," Kiszka says. "Thank

**Greta Van Fleet, from left: Danny Wagner, Sam Kiszka, Jake Kiszka and Josh Kiszka**

Courtesy of HERfitz PR

God for the current rock and roll climate. It's very inspiring."

Greta Van Fleet takes inspiration very seriously. After all, it's what drove them to become musicians from a very early age, with Kiszka and Wagner signing their record deal while they were still attending Frankenmuth High School.

"That was a strange thing," says Kiszka, adding that they waited until he was 18 to finalize the deal so that he could sign as a legal adult. "But when you're in the middle of doing it, it doesn't really register."

Kiszka says he was first inspired to take music seriously by Bob Dylan's "Blood on the Tracks" album.

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## WEEKEND: MUSIC REVIEWS

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"I found my dad's vinyl of it in the basement and 'Tangled Up in Blue' blew my mind," Kiszka says. "The lyricism was incredible. I really wanted to understand that song and I have no idea why. I was only 11 or 12 but I really took the time to understand that song. From then on, I was always in the basement, usually with Jake, and we would sit and listen to Bob Dylan while we would paint and draw. There is just something about Bob Dylan. He is the most phenomenal and that really inspired us to think about music."

Soon, the Kiszka brothers had started a band and would play in their garage for their friends. "People would start coming over to hang out and listen to us screw around in the garage," Kiszka says. "It was just a second nature kind of thing. Everybody was just playing guitar and that's what started us wanting to be musicians. I have very fond memories of those times."

Kiszka said that was when he and his brothers began to understand the power of music.

"Music is a very special thing," he says. "You can wield a paintbrush or camera and create great art, but music just touches something in everybody."

Even though "Anthem of the Peaceful Army" is only Greta Van Fleet's debut, the band is already determined to make the most of their music's power.

"I am obsessed with the story an album can tell," Kiszka says. "We worked very hard on the track listing, making sure all of the story is in there."

When the band was recording in February, it was reacting to "whatever turmoil had plagued a certain country," which led to the opener "Age of Man," where they wonder "Who is the wisest to help us steer? And what we know when the end is near?"

"That's the feeling of where we were at the time, the emotions were that intense," says Kiszka, adding that by the album closer "Anthem" is a call for unity, where they sing, "Can we step back and see what we want the same?"

That kind of ambition, as well as the band's virtuoso playing and Josh Kiszka's wailing vocals, gave the album plenty of fans already, landing them on Forbes' "30 Under 30" list for "bringing back good old-fashioned rock 'n' roll" and on a list of shortlists for a Best New Artist Grammy nomination.

Deep Purple bassist Roger Glover recently told *MB Live*, "A band like Rival Sons or Greta Van Fleet, if they were back in the '70s, they'd be huge — a lot of the charts everywhere. But it's a different world. It's now a world of streaming and a world of likes."

Kiszka says Greta Van Fleet isn't really worried about that world. "There are three trillion other things that rock bands focus on other than music, silly kind of music industry things," he says. "All we care about is playing live shows and fan engagement. For us, talking to our fans is what social media is for. It's not for posting pictures of you wearing expensive shoes."

## It's Mariah Carey season, and 'Caution' is perfectly timed

By Allison Stewart  
Special to The Washington Post

Should you choose to enlist in a pop diva's stan army, your duties will be endless. You must feign enthusiasm for her most obscure remixes and start feuds with the fanbases of other divas over petty or imagined slights. You must comment on all her Instagram posts, reassuring her that she still looks thin, or warning her that the "Saturday Night Live" comedian she's dating gives you a bad feeling.

And sometimes, you flex. Mariah Carey's fans, known collectively as the Lambily, recently sent "Glitter" to the top of the iTunes chart, the result of a viral #JusticeForGlitter campaign.

Carey, making the press rounds to promote her new album, "Caution," seemed underwhelmed by the soundtrack's "Pet Sematary"-like re-emergence.

After all, "Glitter" — released on Sept. 11, 2001, and a companion piece to a famously panned film that also starred Carey — was supposed to kick off her second act. Before "Glitter" tanked, Carey was a glamorous, elastic-voiced star who introduced hip-hop features to pop music, sold tens of millions of albums and could do little wrong.

After "Glitter," she struggled. Her albums followed the same formula they always had, mixing whispery bedroom tracks, catchy uptempo hip-hop-meets-pop songs featuring guest turns from increasingly less dangerous rappers, and ballads that showcased her increasingly unreliable upper register. Sometimes (like 2005's "The Emancipation of Mimi"), it was as if the disaster that was "Glitter" never happened. Other times (like 2014's "Me. I Am Mariah ... the Elusive Chanteuse"), only the Lambily stayed loyal.

In the 17 years post-"Glitter," despite marrying, divorcing and birthing twins, Carey has publicly remained almost exactly, comfortingly the same. She is still a tottering presence in *Lycra* and platform heels. She still resists things normies have resigned themselves to, like fluorescent lighting (Mariah brings her own lighting team with her), and sitting upright. She still has the personal life of a plucky Lifetime TV movie heroine. She is right where you left her.

"Caution" is on track to be Carey's biggest hit in years. It's not an undeniable work of art (it's pretty good, though), but it comes at just the right time: Everyone loves Mariah Carey in November, and Ariana Grande's "Fantasy"-era cosplay only makes us appreciate Carey more. We've returned to her for the same reason people

watch reruns of "The West Wing": because we miss the people we imagined we were and the harmless things we used to like. We miss worrying about the Clinton impeachment, or the cast of "Friends," or whether O.D.B. would straighten himself out eventually.

"Caution" acknowledges, and only slightly panders to, this hunger for '90s nostalgia. It avoids things Carey may no longer be able to do (skyward-stretching, melismatic ballads), or want to do (bangers) but otherwise retraces recognizable patterns. There are collabora-

tions with 18-months-behind-the-curve hitmakers (hi, Skrillex), who revisit the '90s with Mariah because she is not going to 2016 with them.

The Skrillex track, "The Distance," is an R&B ballad with an electro-pop coating and a Ty Dolla Sign feature that sounds new, but old. The Blood Orange/Slick Rick collaboration "Giving Me Life" is like-minded, but clumsier, one of several songs that uses meme-speak to sound current but will sound dated in three months. The record opening "CFO" (which means what you think it means) is Beyoncé's "Irreplaceable" reimagined for One Percenters. Instead of leaving her boyfriend's things at the curb, Carey offers to call his valet. This song may not be about her ex-fiance Australian billionaire James Packer, but she doesn't mind if you think it is.

Packer may also be the snake in the grass in "A No No" ("Off with your head/Now slither out the door"), which wraps a standard "thank you, next" mid-tempo kiss-off in a sample of Lil Kim's "Crush on You" remix, with a bonus appearance from the Notorious B.I.G.

Of course, "A No No" might also be about Stella Bulochnikov, Carey's allegedly overbearing former manager, under whose influence she participated in a disturbingly offbrand reality show and who later sued Carey for sexual harassment. Bulochnikov is almost certainly immortalized in "Portrait" — the album's closing piano ballad. "Portrait" has everything: arch

wordplay, childhood nostalgia, pointed insults, tremulous bravery ("Somewhat desensitized/Still the same hopeful child/... Pushing past the parasites/Down but not demoralized"), and that's just in one verse.

For her Lambily, it's a late-period Mimi highlight reel. For more casual fans, who begin to remember Carey's existence when she pops up in their post-Thanksgiving holiday playlists, it's a necessary reminder of what they've missed.



ARACA PRESS/TNS

**Mariah Carey falls back into familiar, comfortable patterns on her latest release, "Caution" (right).**



## Wilco frontman Tweedy reflects on life, death

By Scott Bauer  
Associated Press

Wilco frontman Jeff Tweedy isn't known for being warm and fuzzy.

So it's with some irony that his first proper solo record of all new material is titled "Warm."

It's also so Tweedy.

Take "Let's Go Rain," for example. At first blush, its upbeat tempo and catchy chorus makes it sound very much like a feel-good campfire sing-along. That's where Tweedy fools you — the song is actually a wish for another biblical flood to wipe the world clean and start over again.

Ah, Jeff! You jokester.

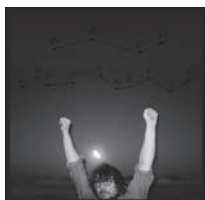
The sound on "Warm" is somewhere between Tweedy's solo acoustic shows and the finely tuned

• Review of Tweedy's new memoir on Page 38

jet-engine rock of Wilco. It has a similar vibe to many songs on "Sukierae," a side project Tweedy released in 2014 under the band name Tweedy.

Exploring life, death, love and heartbreak is familiar territory for Tweedy in Wilco, and he hits on all of those themes with "Warm." The record comes after the death of his father, his wife's battle with cancer and coincides with the release of his memoir, "Let's Go (So We Can Get Back)." Tweedy is at his most introspective in "Having Been Is No Way to Be," reflecting on his sobriety and those who wish he weren't.

"We all think about dying," Tweedy sings on "Don't Forget" before adding in perfectly fitting Tweedy fashion, "Don't let it kill you."



**Jeff Tweedy**

Warm (dBpm Records)



## WEEKEND: BOOKS



# 'I'm just getting started'

Wilco's Jeff Tweedy opens up about his past, his music, the people who have inspired him in funny memoir

Photo courtesy of Williston Sabatini

By KEVIN C. JOHNSON  
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

**J**eff Tweedy has never been a fan of the rock star memoir. He admits he's not well-versed in the genre.

"They never appealed to me for some reason — I don't know why," he says. "I'm sure there are a lot of things I could learn from reading other people's biographies and memoirs. I just don't have the interest or patience."

But the Wilco frontman managed to muster up enough interest and patience to write one of his own. His "Let's Go (So We Can Get Back): A Memoir of Recording and Discarding With Wilco, Etc." is out now.

"It's a pretty low-stakes genre, writing a rock 'n' roll memoir. There's not a lot of pressure. But I wanted it to be honest."

"Let's Go (So We Can Get Back)" is the first official memoir by Tweedy, one of the most important modern names in rock to come from the St. Louis area. He was part of the seminal alt-country band Uncle Tupelo and now is with Grammy-winning Wilco, an alt-rock band based in Chicago, where he now lives.

The memoir is a deep dive into Tweedy's story — his upbringing, life, music and career — with apparently nothing off limits.

He writes of growing up in Belleville, Ill., losing his virginity at age 14, his songwriting process (and stories behind the songs), the rise and fall of Uncle Tupelo, tales of Uncle Tupelo's Jay Farrar and Wilco's Jay Bennett, and his own struggles with addiction and depression.

Local references are plentiful: Vintage Vinyl, Euclid Records, Cicero's, the Checkerdome, Chuck Berry, and his first concert, the Stray Cats at Mississippi Nights.

"To be honest, I didn't think of this on my own. I was asked by some book people if I was ready or interested in the process of writing a book, and I thought about it for a while," he says.

One of his first considerations was his wife, Sue Miller, and sons, Spencer and Sam — how they'd feel about it and how they'd be involved. He incorporates his

family in a unique way, using conversations as part of the narrative. One is titled "A Conversation With Spencer About How Much of Our Relationship He Really Wants Me to Reveal in This Book." Tweedy didn't interview his younger son, Sam.

"They're a big part of me and have a role to play in how the narrative goes," Tweedy says. "I felt like, for me to draw the most honest picture, I wanted people to have insight in how my family sees me. I really wanted their voices to be a part of it in kind of a meta way. I thought that was interesting."

Tweedy, 51, had to ask himself whether it was even time for him to write a memoir.

"I'm just getting started," he says. "I feel like there's always a sense when somebody writes a memoir, they're nearing the end of their career or they're a little bit older than in their 50s."

Eventually, he realized writing the book couldn't hurt anything.

"I might have some stories to share that could help people with the same set of issues," he says.

Getting started was the hardest part. And getting over his fear of writing prose. He approached it like he was telling a story.

"I wasn't getting out of it," he says. "I'd signed a contract."

Tweedy says he felt comfortable putting his life out there, wants and all, and being as transparent as possible.

"I'm being open about a lot of things people look at as being difficult to share," he says. "I felt obligated to share some things. I have a position where I'm visible, and I truly believe that a lot of the stigma about mental illness and addiction would be a lot less difficult for people if people were willing to talk about it without fear of being stigmatized."

He doesn't think his experiences are particularly unique — or something that needs to be protected or hidden. "But there's a misconception about creativity and that type of suffering and illness, and I wanted to be clear about that."

In prepping the memoir, Tweedy says,

dredging up memories he hadn't thought of in decades was cathartic for him.

"It's strange how memories work. When you start to write things down, you allow yourself to be absorbed in the process of writing. You start meditating on these things that happened long ago, close your eyes and start seeing specific pieces of the picture."

"I'd always thought of myself as having a terrible autobiographical memory. I can't remember venues played and a lot of things. But the interesting thing about writing is when you focus on trying to convey a specific event, you see the contours of it more clearly."

Tweedy says there weren't any particular guidelines or requirements for the book; he was given free reign.

"I wasn't pushed to dig up dirt or make any salacious claims. I wasn't required by contract to be scintillating. And I think I would have had a tough time digging up anything to compete with the Motley Crue bio."

Still, Tweedy discusses for the first time a long-ago encounter with Farrar's then-girlfriend, now-wife, in the Uncle Tupelo van that helped bring the end for the band.

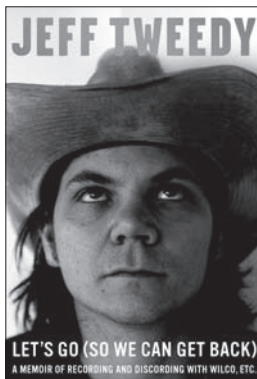
Tweedy writes that he drunkenly said he loved her and that she said it too. He says the exchange was innocent though obnoxious. But Farrar heard it.

"Jay has told the story from his point of view, and it's more sinister than I remember it," he says. "It's my time to clear the air."

Tweedy would never rule out an Uncle Tupelo reunion, but he doesn't see one happening.

"I personally don't have a deep desire to reapproach the music," he says. "I'm proud of it and what we've done. I'm proud of Jay and all the music he continues to make. But obviously, I'm deeply involved with my own music. And I don't get the sense from Jay that he's eager to revisit."

In the end, Tweedy hopes his memoir leaves readers with the feeling that "somebody sat down with them, and we had a conversation that was honest and natural."



## Let's Go (So We Can Get Back)

Jeff Tweedy

In his memoir, Jeff Tweedy, frontman of the American rock band Wilco, displays a sense of humor that his audiences will know well from his onstage banter.

His lyrics can be serious or light-hearted, melancholy or hopeful, and sometimes nonsensical, but his memoir is laced with funny anecdotes. In discussing his father's co-workers on the railroad, he speaks of their "teeth per head" and describes himself as "a doom-dabbling, fifty-year-old, borderline misanthrope, nap enthusiast."

Tweedy is a celebrated singer-songwriter who has released 10 albums with Wilco since the band's founding in 1994. He worked with Englishman Billy Bragg to create original music for existing Woody Guthrie lyrics and has produced albums for Mavis Staples, including the Grammy-winning "You Are Not Alone."

The book will appeal to die-hard fans eager to learn about the inner workings of the group and Tweedy's relationships with bandmates past and present, in particular, the two Jays, as he refers to them (Jay Farrar with whom Tweedy formed Uncle Tupelo and Jay Bennett of Wilco), but it will also appeal to those interested in the artist's inner life. Tweedy writes about his songwriting methods and how they have changed over the course of his career, his earliest influences beginning with the first time he read about punk rock — how he was enthralled before he'd even heard the music. He recounts how he found a copy of The Clash's album "London Calling" labeled with a "parental advisory" warning sticker during a shopping trip to Target with his mother. Over the course of several return visits he peeled the sticker off the record cover, hiding the album in a different section of the store's record bins so that it wouldn't be found until he'd removed the sticker entirely and asked his mother if he could buy it.

"In 'Let's Go (So We Can Get Back),' Tweedy recounts key episodes in his early musical life and also tells of events and relationships that shaped his being, from his close relationship with his mother, years of painful migraines, addiction to painkillers, depression and recovery, to his marriage, making music with his two sons and his parents' deaths. Through all of it he has continued to write and record songs. He says: "Learning how to play guitar is the one thing I always look back on with wonderment."

Readers might sometimes wonder at Tweedy's lyrics, but in his playing, singing and writing, whether in solo efforts, in collaboration with Wilco or in his producing other artists, we know we have something to treasure.

— Jonathan Elderfield/AP

## WEEKEND: TELEVISION &amp; DVD

## NEW ON DVD

**“Searching”:** The film works both as a smart and fascinating thriller and a wonderfully creative way to tell the tale. The best part is that writer/director Aneesh Chaganty never resorts to any unfounded leaps just to get to the conclusion. He establishes a compelling story, spreads the clues in plain sight and brings it all together in a satisfying and tantalizing finale.

All of the plot points are delivered through a cinematic format that has never been used to this extent. Chaganty opts to tell his story as if the viewer was seated at a computer screen next to the distraught dad (John Cho).

The images are a mix of computer screens where the frustrated father searches for information with conversations held via Skype. Watching the film at home on a smaller screen makes the approach even more enjoyable than seeing it in the theater.

**“The Best of the Three Stooges”:**

The Three Stooges presented a world of slapstick comedy for more than 50 years. The humor often bordered on abuse, but no matter the physicality of the material, Moe, Larry and Curly kept coming back for more. It all went into making them one of the greatest comedy troupes of all time.

Fans can see many of their antics in the box set, which includes 87 short films from 1934 to 1945 plus cartoons and a nine-part documentary. If you are too young to have seen their work, this is a good way to catch up on a big part of comedy history.

Also on DVD:

**“Picnic at Hanging Rock”:** Story of the mysterious disappearances of three schoolgirls and their governess on Valentine’s Day in 1900.

**“Sharp Objects”:** An alcoholic journalist is assigned to cover the story of two girls who have gone missing in her hometown. Amy Adams stars.

**“The Little Stranger”:** A family is plagued by strange happenings in their house.

**“Agony”:** Two suspects in a brutal murder case react differently to being investigated.

**“Jack Irish: Season 2”:** Guy Pearce reprises his role as a former criminal lawyer with a knack for getting pulled into unsavory situations.

**“How the Grinch Stole Christmas”:** The 1966 animated TV with Boris Karloff as the voice of the Grinch is being re-released.

**“The Critters Collection”:** Includes the four films starring the lethal creatures.

**“Outrage Coda”:** The final chapter of Takeshi Kitano’s underworld film series. **“Elf: Buddy’s Sing & Cheer Along Edition”:** The special edition of the Will Ferrell holiday film includes trivia, musical numbers and animation.

**“Elizabeth I and Her Enemies”:** Lily Cole stars in the tale of jealousy, treachery, ambition and tragedy of Queen Elizabeth I, from young princess to mature queen.

— Rick Bentley/Tribune News Service



John C. McGinley and Janet Varney star in “Stan Against Evil.” Season 3 premieres Monday on AFN-Spectrum.

# Balancing act

## McGinley steers ‘Stan Against Evil’ between scary, funny

BY RICK BENTLEY  
Tribune News Service

John C. McGinley has three tasks in front of him: dealing with the debut of season three of his IFC series “Stan Against Evil”; his upcoming trip to the New York Comic Con to tell fans about the new season of his horror-comedy-family series; and the round of golf he plans to pay once he gets done talking about “Stan Against Evil.”

Those are all important to the New York native who is not only the star, but also a producer on the show created by Dana Gould (“The Simpsons”). It’s the meticulous attention to details by McGinley and Gould in creating each episode that has made the series so much fun for McGinley and a hit for IFC.

“For us, the tone of the show is everything,” McGinley said in an interview. “It lives somewhere in between the extreme spectrum of comedy and horror. It exists in the middle between works like ‘The Exorcist,’ which is scarier than hell, and ‘Scooby-Doo,’ where it’s fun because the monsters are basically decorated.”

“Stan lives in the middle where we make the witches scary, but you can still break a joke. But it’s not at the expense of the witches. That’s hard because you can de-nerve the monsters with jokes, and then it’s not scary.”

In this hybrid world of “Stan Against Evil,” McGinley plays Stan Miller, the grumpy ex-police sheriff of Willard’s Mill. He was able to keep peace in the small New England town for years

despite there being a curse on the job because of all the witch burnings centuries ago. Every sheriff before him died a quick death, and he wants to help his replacement, Evie (Janet Varney), avoid the fast fate.

The eight-episode third season picks up where the previous season ended with Stan and Evie accidentally opening a portal into the past that allows the 17th century demons to create new mayhem. Deborah Baker Jr. and Nate Mooney return to co-star as Denise Miller, Stan’s absent-minded daughter, and Deputy Leon Drinkwater, Evie’s right-hand man.

Feedback that McGinley gets from fans is that they love the tone of the show, especially in regards to how all of the main players are — in McGinley’s words — “profoundly ill equipped to be doing this.” Because of the curmudgeonly nature of the character, whether he’s dealing with friends and family or beating a demon to death with a pipe, McGinley describes Stan as an “Archie Bunker fighting witches.”

Gould sent McGinley the original script for “Stan Against Evil” with hopes that McGinley would be attracted to the project. McGinley immediately was intrigued by the story and character, but requested a few tweaks.

“The No. 1 thing he was missing in the scripts was how damaged and wounded the character of Stan is,” McGinley said. “In the first three minutes of the pilot episode, he loses his job and he loses his wife of 26, 27 years. Stan can’t do anything until he reconciles the loss of his

wife who, it turns out, was protecting him all those years.

“I told him when there is a loss like this, what happens to most men is that they are wounded. Most of us are defined by our wives, our families and our jobs.”

There’s been plenty of work to use in measuring McGinley. “Stan Against Evil” is the latest credit for McGinley, who amassed a lengthy acting résumé before and since his run on “Scrubs” from 2001 to 2010. Those credits include “Platoon,” “Point Break,” “Car 54, Where Are You?” “Any Given Sunday,” “Burn Notice” and “Ground Floor.”

McGinley also devotes long hours with projects connected to being a father. He advocates for Down syndrome awareness and acceptance, a subject he knows personally as his 21-year-old son, Max, has the condition.

Max has had an impact on the way McGinley approaches a performance, especially with Stan.

“Because of my son Max’s special needs and as an adult being re-grounded to what gratitude and what challenges are, that’s what I had to ground Stan in,” McGinley said. “Stan had to be grounded. I tell young actors all the time that once someone calls ‘Action,’ that camera is an X-ray machine.”

“Since everything we are doing is a lie — I am not Stan, I am not Dr. Cox — we have to find a way to reduce the profundity of the lie. To do that is to come from some truth. I — John McGinley — can connect to Stan’s loss, and that’s what will resonate.”

**“The tone of the show is everything. It lives somewhere in between the extreme spectrum of comedy and horror ... between works like ‘The Exorcist’ ... and ‘Scooby-Doo.’”**

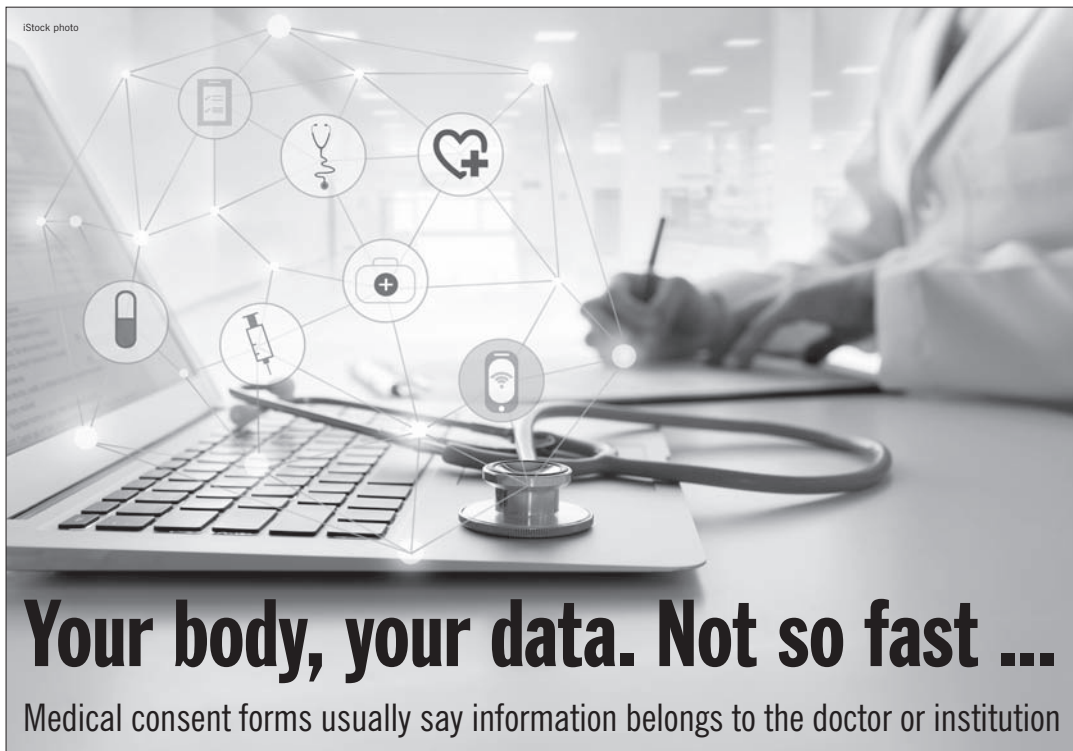
John C. McGinley



Screen Gems

John Cho stars as an anguished father in “Searching,” now available on DVD.

## WEEKEND: HEALTH &amp; FITNESS



# Your body, your data. Not so fast ...

Medical consent forms usually say information belongs to the doctor or institution

By STEVEN PETROW  
The Washington Post

Do you think you own your own medical data? Your hospital and doctor records, lab and radiology tests, genetic information, even the actual tissue removed during a biopsy or other surgical procedure? Well, you don't.

It's a good bet that the fine print of the consent form you signed before your latest test or operation said that all the data or tissue samples belong to the doctor or institution performing it. They can study it, sell it or do whatever they want with it, without notifying or compensating you, although the data must be depersonalized in their best effort to make sure you are anonymous.

I've signed a number of those forms myself, and I'll admit I've never thought about it until recently, when I read that Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center has been criticized for licensing patients' personal data to a for-profit artificial intelligence startup in which the hospital holds an equity stake.

With that news, my ears perked up. My sister, late mother and I have all been patients at Memorial Sloan Kettering, with some tissue samples in this game. So I was keenly interested in the dual questions of privacy and ownership.

Frankly, I was both exhilarated and confounded to learn that the hospital had signed a partnership deal with the startup Paige.AI that gave the company exclusive access to the center's 25 million slides of patient tissues in the name of cancer research: exhilarated by the promise of quicker and more accurate cancer

diagnoses as a result of the digitization and sharing of the hospital's tissue slides. Confounded because this partnership limits its access to that data to one commercial partner instead of sharing it with other researchers worldwide whose efforts might also help find cures.

Make no mistake, this is big business. In 2017, the legal buying, selling and trading of our personal medical data totaled \$14 billion. (Memorial Sloan Kettering's partnership with Paige.AI is just a drop in this big bucket). Patient health data is routinely sold or licensed to research companies such as Paige.AI, as well as to medical data brokers who pool the data — from doctor and hospital records, to insurance claims and prescriptions — which has significant value. For instance, pharmaceutical companies pay a premium for this data to target their online ads more precisely.

This is all perfectly legal, and courts have upheld it even if you didn't quite know what you were agreeing to.

As a cancer survivor, I know the importance of advancing medical science, fast. When I was diagnosed with testicular cancer in 1984, the 10-year survival rate was greater than 90 percent. Had I been diagnosed a decade or so earlier, I'd probably be dead now. What happened in the interim? Researchers had developed a new chemotherapy cocktail that changed the treatment of, and prognosis for, my cancer. As a beneficiary of that lifesaving research, I say hallelujah!

But I had paid only cursory attention to the consent form I was given before treatment, mostly because I was crazyscared. In 2013, my mother was similarly hyper-focused on the dangers and benefits of her proposed lung cancer surgery, and

neither she (nor I, her advocate) read the form closely. Neither of us considered what might become of her tissues and organs, and we would have been shocked if anyone had told us she'd agreed for them to be sold or licensed for research.

But we had. Memorial's current surgical consent form, which is typical, includes this sentence: "[T]he hospital has my permission to use [my] tissues and organs in any way that advances medical science, including the development of biomedical products in which I claim no financial interest."

Had Mom been asked directly for permission, I'm certain she would have said yes, especially knowing it would aid research. Likewise, I'd sign away if I saw that it might help develop more accurate diagnoses or lifesaving therapies. But looking at that onerous consent language, all I can think is, "Wow — we really should have read those consent forms more closely." And, "That was not the right time to be trying to make sense of such important information."

Our data is meant to be stripped of all personally identifying characteristics — name, Social Security number and addresses. But Adam Tanner, author of "Our Bodies, Our Data: How Companies Make Billions Selling Our Medical Records," writes that "as data-mining technology becomes ubiquitous, it also makes it easier to learn a previously anonymous identity."

If anything, the law is clear. Jodi Daniel, a lawyer specializing in digital health and health information policy, explained to me that patients do not own their medical records in 49 out of 50 states. (The exception is New Hampshire, where patients and providers both can claim ownership.)

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, a 1996 federal law that protects health privacy, takes no position on ownership, which wasn't contemplated back in the 1990s. Daniel, who helped write that law, says it was written before "we were thinking about the value and use of data the way we do today."

Of course, the value of biodata has been well-known to researchers for decades. Witness the story of Henrietta Lacks, whose "immortal" cell line — the first-ever tumor cells to reproduce indefinitely — gave researchers around the world data that led to new vaccines, new cancer treatments, even in vitro fertilization. In 1951, Lacks was not offered even the most cursory opportunity to consent, but neither she nor her heirs were legally entitled to compensation for the advancements her cells made possible.

Patients are regularly asked to sign what are called "blanket" consent forms, which means agreeing to all the terms. Health advocates say you can strike clauses that you don't agree with, but that isn't looked upon kindly by some hospitals.

When I asked Roger Wilson, the chair of Memorial Sloan Kettering's Institutional Review Board, about this, he said that "operationally [it] is problematic, because individuals might say, 'Well, you can use this part but you can't use that part,'" which he fears "introduces the potential for error."

Jennifer Miller, an assistant professor at the Yale School of Medicine and a founder of Bioethics International, doesn't think blanket consents are ethical, especially "when someone is likely sick and potentially vulnerable."

"Why are we forcing sick patients to think about data ownership issues right before they get surgery?" she said.



## WEEKEND: FAMILY



Henry Hailey, 10, plays the online game Fortnite early in the morning Oct. 6 in the basement of his family's Chicago home. His parents are on a quest to limit screen time for him and his brother.

# Struggling over screen time

## Parents finding it hard to set limits, get kids offline

By MARTHA IRVINE  
Associated Press

It is Saturday morning, and 10-year-old Henry Hailey is up at the crack of dawn. Still in PJs, his microphone-equipped headphones glowing blue, he fixates on the popular online game "Fortnite" on a large screen.

"What? Right as I was about to finish it, I died," he calls out disappointedly to his friend Gus, a fellow fifth-grader playing the game from his home just a few blocks away. "Dude, I should NOT have died."

The digital battles resume, and Henry's enthusiasm never wanes. Would he play all day if his parents let him? "Probably," he concedes with a slight grin.

But they do not. Like many other parents, the Haileys are on a reinvigorated mission to limit screen time for Henry and his 15-year-old brother, Everett. For some parents, it feels like an exercise in futility. They are busy, overwhelmed and tired of the fight against increasingly omnipresent screens.

Getting Henry off screens has been a constant battle, his parents say. "Then once he's off, there's a lot of complaining and grumpiness for a while as we try to coax him to do something else," says his mom, Barb Hailey. "He's upset. Mom is a crank. What is it all for?"

The goal, experts say, should be to help kids learn to manage their own time as they get older and try physically active and socially connected as much offline as on. But parents in many American households are finding the power struggles — tantrums, withdrawal and, in some cases, even school and discipline problems — difficult, especially as more kids get access to screens at younger ages.

A survey of 13- to 17-year-olds released this fall by the nonprofit Common Sense Media found that 95 percent of U.S. teens have their own mobile device. Seventy percent of them check social media several times a day, up from 34 percent in 2012. More than half say that their devices distract them from homework or the people they're with.

Some tech companies have at least acknowledged concerns about overuse and outright abuse of digital media. Smartphones and various independent apps have added features that allow parents to monitor and set some restrictions.

**Parents in many American households are finding the power struggles — tantrums, withdrawal and, in some cases, even school and discipline problems — difficult, especially as more kids get access to screens at younger and younger ages.**

But those features aren't enabled by default, so new limits can come as a shock to those on the receiving end.

That happened late this summer in the Hailey household on Chicago's North Side after dad, Allen Hailey, began watching the amount of time elder son Everett was spending on Wi-Fi. The teen was clocking more than four hours a day on sports videos, games and chats with friends on social media.

"I don't think he had any idea how

much time he was spending online," says the father, who decided to block both boys from Wi-Fi during certain hours. He tested it out one night without warning.

One minute, Everett was talking to a friend on social media. "Then it went out," says the teen, who immediately complained aloud about the injustice of it all. Dad held firm and told him he needed to read a book or go outside to shoot hoops.

"I didn't do anything wrong to deserve that," Everett still insists. "If I get my work done, I think I should have my own time."

Some parents simply put off getting their kid a phone. Jacqui Koch, a college professor and mother in Wilmette, Ill., had her sixth-grade daughter sign a pledge to wait until eighth grade for a smartphone — part of the national "Wait Until 8th" movement. Her daughter didn't put up much fuss, in part because mom has limited tech use for years.

"We are definitely not the norm of what we're surrounded by," Koch says, noting that she saw a "huge uptick" of kids with phones in fifth grade. Now some parents she knows are trying to backpedal, "and that's hard," she says.

Another key: Parents setting limits with their own devices. It's not an easy balance to strike, but all the Haileys are trying. "We may not like it," Everett says, as his little brother nods. "But we know it's for the best."

The boys do regularly hang out with friends in person, and both play soccer. Everett plays the saxophone. Henry plays trumpet and recently took up the drums.

Mom laughs: "So when we say, 'Get off the screen' and he goes and plays the snare drum, we have to live with that decision."

## THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



## Take a chance on a military spouse

My ringtone sounded, right on time. A burning ache gnawed at my stomach. I took a deep breath and swiped to answer.

"Hello?"

"Oh, uh, hi! Lisa?"

"Yes. Hi, how are you, Ted?"

"Great! Great, great ... so good to hear from you! Uh, well, I mean, good to talk to you," Ted chuckled nervously. "How long has it been since you ..."

"Three weeks and four days," I interrupted, wanting to get to the reason for the call.

"Did I get the job or not?" I thought, letting Ted ramble for another minute to cure his jitters. Even though I had been the leading candidate throughout the interview process, I was bracing myself for rejection. Judging by Ted's nerves, it wasn't looking good.

Finally, Ted elaborately sighed and said, "Well, Lisa, I hate making these calls. I want you to know that we had another candidate come in late to the process ... she had experience that we just couldn't pass up. And, well, we made her an offer."

I was silent, but not surprised.

Ted filled the awkward silence with painful prattle.

"You know, I, uh, we all really loved you here, so this is a hard one, but we're really hoping that something else will come up in the future ... There may be something in six months, three months down the road, we're not quite sure. But we all really felt your passion, and would like to see you here one day."

"I appreciate you letting me know, Ted. Thank you." I mercifully allowed him to escape the miserable call.

A week later, a friend sent me a listing for a light, part-time job, for which I was educationally overqualified. "I know it's not what you're looking for," she told me, "but it's a great job." I fired off my resumé.

Two weeks after my interview, I got the rejection call, with an explanation that another candidate came forward who had consistent experience and needed no training.

It was the third rejection in two months of interviewing for jobs as a new employee. After each rejection call, I sent emails asking for "any feedback you might have as I continue my job search." Each time, the employers offered no criticism of my interviews or resumé whatsoever. One even said my interview was "perfect." However, each employer responded that the winning candidate simply had more experience.

Story of my life.

As a Navy wife who moved many times in 23 years while my husband was active duty, making the fragmented bits of my interrupted work history and volunteer experience look like a "career" takes the kind of creativity that I obviously do not possess. Despite the fact that I have advanced educational degrees that took me seven years and more than \$100,000 to acquire, and licenses to practice law in two states, I can't seem to get a job.

I am not alone. Military spouses all over America find it challenging to land good jobs. According to a 2018 study of Military Spouses in the Labor Market by the White House's Council of Economic Advisers, military spouses attend college more than their civilian peers, but face double the unemployment rates, earn an average of \$12,000 less annually, are underemployed relative to their education and are disproportionately affected by occupational licensing requirements.

The Council concluded that "frequent moves, unpredictable hours, rural base assignments and deployments all take a toll on the labor market outcomes of military spouses [who are] subject to the geographic and temporal constraints imposed by their active-duty spouse."

Although new initiatives to hire military spouses were announced earlier this year, the issue soon disappeared from the headlines. National unemployment rates have reached record lows, but the problem for military spouses persists.

When all is said and done, military spouses don't want lip service. What we really need is a chance.

Read more of Lisa Smith Molinari's columns at: [themeatandpotatoesoflife.com](http://themeatandpotatoesoflife.com)  
Email: [meatandpotatoesoflife@googlemail.com](mailto:meatandpotatoesoflife@googlemail.com)

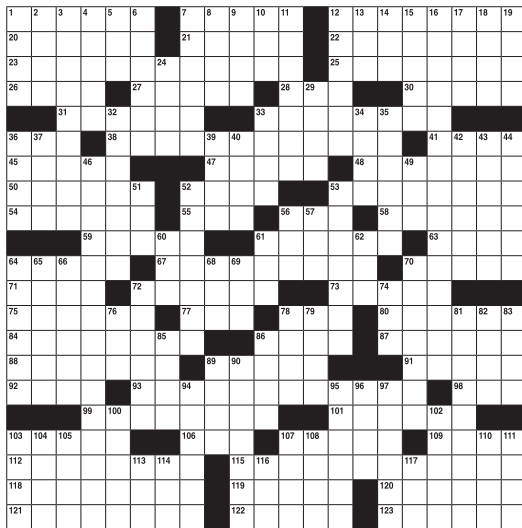
# WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

## NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

### SILENT FINALES

BY JOON PAKK / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

- ACROSS**
- 1 Late Queen of Soul  
7 Places for bears or villains  
12 What a recipe may be written on  
20 Puts up  
21 Veep under Nixon  
22 Formal defense  
23 Photo caption for the winning team's M.V.P. being carried off the field?  
25 Get an F in physics?  
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33 Rey, to Luke, in "The Last Jedi"  
36 Place for a stud to go  
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67 Piece of writing that's half in verse?  
70 Some paid rides, informally  
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72 An itinerary  
72 Avenging spirits in Greek myth  
73 Bad thing to hit with a hammer  
75 "Casey at the Bat" poet Ernest  
77 Wee bit  
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86 Pizzaz  
87 Fellini's "La \_\_\_\_"  
88 Inducing forgetfulness  
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91 Dollar signs without the bars  
92 Word after who or how  
93 Dropping the baton in a relay race, e.g.?  
98 Bit of ink  
99 Optimum  
101 Senator Feinstein  
103 Blues legend Waters  
106 \_\_\_\_ complicated  
107 Area near the shore  
109 Publians' servings  
112 Area near the shore
- 115 Warning not given on a golf course?  
118 Something on the rise today  
119 Actress Belafonte  
120 Start to inhabit  
121 Baja California city  
122 "The Zoo Story" playwright  
123 Movie trailer, e.g.
- DOWN**
- 1 Name of what was once the world's second-largest saltwater lake  
2 Tabula \_\_\_\_  
3 "Hematie, magnetite — take your pick?"  
4 Line that ended with Nicholas II  
5 "\_\_\_\_ Grace" (title of address)  
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7 Los Angeles neighborhood next to Beverly Grove  
8 Wide-eyed  
9 Memo starter  
10 Half of  
11 Make official?  
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15 Big female role on HBO's "Westworld"  
16 Two things you might find in Sherwood Forest?  
17 As long as one can remember
- 18 Work (up)  
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32 Producer of "60 Minutes"  
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34 European stratovolcano  
35 Astronauts' wear  
36 Young news  
37 Came down  
39 Spike  
40 Human Rights Campaign intis.  
42 Minor altercation  
43 Soccer shot resulting from a corner kick, often  
44 Lawn tools  
46 Like Tara, several times in "Gone With the Wind"?  
49 Singer DiFranco  
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52 Some magazine perfume ads  
53 Conductor  
56 Country on the Arctic Circle: Abbe.  
57 "Yes for me"  
60 The Wildcats of the Big 12 Conf.  
61 Brit. legislators  
62 [Shrug]  
64 Forcibly oppose  
65 Following close behind  
66 Some celebrity charity events  
68 Shirking work, maybe, for short



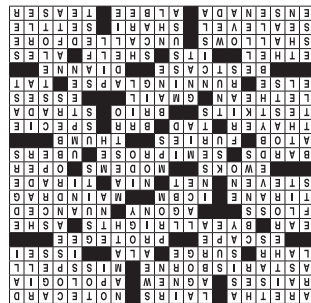
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70 Scads of  
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82 "Any \_\_\_\_"  
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90 Pageant who's 1966 runner-up was Halle Berry  
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95 Antarctic penguin  
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102 1994 tripartite treaty  
103 De bene \_\_\_\_ (legal phrase)  
104 In those days  
105 Tommy of temis  
107 Temporary cover  
108 Hopper  
110 Writer \_\_\_\_ Stanley Gardner  
111 Tiresias, in "Oedipus Rex"  
113 Some games  
114 Join  
116 Capitals' org.  
117 Ruby of "A Raisin in the Sun"

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## FACES



Missy Elliott, shown in 2015 in New Orleans, is one of rap's greatest voices and also a songwriter and producer who has crafted songs for the likes of Beyoncé and Whitney Houston. She's also a nominee for the 2019 Songwriters Hall of Fame.

# 'I feel TRULY BLESSED'

## Missy Elliott spins conversations with girlfriends into hitmaking songwriting

By MESFIN FEKADU  
Associated Press

For Missy Elliott, being a good friend and listener turned into songwriting gold. Conversations with her girlfriends fueled a great deal of her songwriting, Elliott said, resulting in her turning those stories into smash hits, from Monica's "So Gone," a No. 1 R&B success, to Fantasia's "Free Yourself."

"I would be around friends and a lot of times everybody's just laughing and playing, but I would listen to the stories and use those in songs because they were like everyday topics for the girls that I hung around (with)," Elliott said in an interview with The Associated Press. "They didn't know that, but I was just sitting there like, 'Wow, that's a song.'"

"You keep going through the same thing with the same dude, keep going back, over and over again and we keep sitting here listening, saying 'we ain't gon' be there next time when you go back,' and we right here again, sitting through the same story," she added, laughing.

Elliott could probably write a song about anything. Her wild, eccentric style and creative lyricism make her one of music's best storytellers and recently earned her a nomination for the prestigious 2019 Songwriters Hall of Fame class. She could be the first female rapper to enter the organization and the third overall rapper after recent inductees Jay-Z and Jermaine Dupri.

"I feel so humbled and truly blessed to be even nominated—that's huge," she said. The rapper-songwriter-producer-singer has a number of Top 10 pop hits, rang-

ing from her own songs with "Work It," "Get Ur Freak On" and "Lose Control" to tracks she has written for others, including Ciara's "1,2 Step," 702's "Where My Girls At," Tweet's "Oops (Oh My)," Total's "Trippin'" and Nicole Wray's "Make It Hot." She even produced Keyshia Cole's anthem, "Let It Go," which reached No. 7 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart, and produced the 2001 remake of "Lady Marmalade" with Christina Aguilera, Pink, Mya and Lil' Kim, which hit the No. 1 spot for five weeks and won a Grammy Award.

"It's been amazing to give them a voice," Elliott said of writing lyrics for others.

"We build a friendship beyond music, but I'm always humbled that they trust me. And I always ask them, before doing a song, what are you going through?" added Elliott, who has also collaborated with Whitney Houston, Beyoncé, Aaliyah, Janet Jackson, Mary J. Blige and Jazmine Sullivan.

Elliott said it can be harder when it comes to writing for herself. The girl who used to sing loudly outdoors with a hairbrush as her microphone and wrote lyrics on her bedroom walls said "the expectations that I have on my own self are extremely high, so it's always tough for me."

"It's like, 'You could do better,'" she explained. "And when I'm writing for other people, I feel more relaxed because I feel like a lot of times my style was always so different that writing for other people at times kind of made them step out of the box they were in."

But don't fret; the superstar is still cooking up new music. "I had got to a place where it felt more like a job than fun, and now it's fun again," she said.



Jackman



Atwood



Grande



Moreno



Ansari

### Hugh Jackman plans singing tour next year

Hugh Jackman plans to launch his first world tour next year.

The multitalented entertainer announced his "The Man. The Music. The Show." tour on Thursday, which will feature Jackman singing songs from "The Greatest Showman," "Les Misérables" and Broadway musicals, among other selections. He will be accompanied by a live orchestra.

The tour starts in Europe, officially kicking off in Hamburg, Germany, on May 13, 2019. He will play two shows at The O2 Arena in London.

The North American leg begins June 18 in Houston.

### Atwood writing sequel to 'Handmaid's Tale'

Margaret Atwood is writing a sequel to "The Handmaid's Tale." "The Testaments" will be published next September by Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, the publisher announced Wednesday. The book is set 15 years after "The Handmaid's Tale." Atwood's novel about a dystopian society in the imagined land of Gilead was a best seller when first published in 1985. The novel is also the basis for an acclaimed series on Hulu.

Atwood, a Canadian author, said in a statement that the sequel was inspired by readers' questions about Gilead and by the "world we've been living in."

### Grande in new four-part docu-series on YouTube

Ariana Grande is giving fans an all-access pass into her musical life through a new documentary series on YouTube.

The streaming service says Grande will be featured in "Ariana Grande: Dangerous Woman Diaries." The four-part series, which launched Thursday on the singer's YouTube channel, will show highlights from the making of her latest album, "Sweetener." The documentary will also show new footage from her Dangerous Woman Tour, which was suspended after a terrorist bombing killed 22 and injured hundreds at Manchester Arena in May 2017.

### Rita Moreno joins 'West Side Story' film

Rita Moreno's portrayal of Anita in the classic 1961 film "West Side Story" won her an Oscar. Now, she has a different part in a remake directed by Steven Spielberg.

Moreno's publicist confirmed Wednesday that the actress will play Valentina, a reworked version of the character of Doc, the owner of the store where Tony works. Ansel Elgort has been cast as Tony. The story follows two star-crossed lovers, Tony and Maria, who are associated with rival New York street gangs. Moreno, 86, will also serve as an executive producer.

### Ansari announces stand-up tour

Aziz Ansari has scheduled his first stand-up tour since being accused of sexual misconduct.

The comedian will make stops in a number of cities in 2019, beginning in February in Boston, he announced on social media. Ansari has kept a low profile since Babe.net published an article in January in which a 23-year-old woman claimed the comedian pressured her into engaging in multiple sexual acts. The report garnered a mixed response, with some critics contending it was an example of a bad date but not sexual misconduct.

From wire services



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## OPINION

## Dems gave election reform top billing. Now what?

By CARL P. LEUBSDORF

The Dallas Morning News

**A**t the start of each Congress, the House majority party assigns the label H.R. 1 to a prime piece of legislation, a coveted designation that exemplifies its priorities for the coming two years.

In the outgoing Congress, Republicans assigned it to the tax cut bill that became the GOP's signature legislative achievement. For the incoming House Democratic majority, the choice is a broad-ranging package of election reforms aimed at dealing with a multiplicity of problems that have arisen in recent years.

It includes restoration of a crucial part of the Voting Rights Act, a national voter registration system, restrictions on gerrymandering and a variety of election and ethics reforms including expanding conflict-of-interest laws to cover the president and the vice president, who are now exempted.

It's a statement of "what Democrats stand for and are going to fight for," the measure's chief sponsor, Rep. John Sarbanes, D-Md., told The Washington Post. "These are the reforms that will ultimately change the balance of power in Washington," Sarbanes and Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi declared in a separate Post op-ed.

That is, if they pass. For while the Democrats may have enough votes to pass them in the House, ultimate enactment is in doubt, given the likely opposition from Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and President Donald Trump.

Still, there's no doubt the nation's election system needs major changes after another election that ended with widespread complaints from both parties, ranging from frustration over inefficient procedures to charges of fraud.

Last year, Trump created a commission to probe his unproven fraud allegations, but it collapsed amid partisan wrangling. More recently, defeated Georgia Demo-

cratic gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams announced she'd sue to improve the state's voting procedures. But broader changes are needed to ensure all Americans can vote.

From evidence to date, fraud is not the problem. For the past decade, various groups have sought without success to document the voter fraud Trump has trumpeted for years and some Democrats unfortunately echoed after close Georgia and Florida elections.

The real problem is that many states have outdated registration rolls and voting procedures that have failed to keep up with population growth. More than 110 million people voted this year, 12 million in California where some jurisdictions are still counting three weeks after the election.

Those numbers suggest some concerns about limiting voting are exaggerated. But more than half of eligible voters stayed home; cumbersome procedures and restrictive requirements are clearly one reason.

Much of the responsibility for fixing this lies with states where problems have persisted. This year's poster child is Florida, where both parties have cited incompetent personnel and inadequate procedures.

But Congress can do something too, and that's what House Democrats have in mind. Two portions of their bill deserve special attention.

The first would renew and update the Voting Rights Act's pre-clearance procedures that the Supreme Court threw out in 2013 as outdated but urged Congress to fix. Their plan replaces the discarded section, which required pre-clearance for states designated in 1965 for past discrimination, with one covering states with violations in the past 25 years.

The new measure would affect Texas, Arizona, California, New York and nine Southern states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia.

Significantly, all have sizable minority populations.

Without the pre-clearance provision, many states including Texas have enacted restrictive voter ID laws and other provisions that critics say were designed to limit voting by minorities. House Republicans ignored proposals to update the 1965 act.

Enactment now remains problematic, since it requires not only House passage but support from a bipartisan Senate majority and Trump's signature. Even if passed, implementation by this administration's Justice Department is questionable.

The second would establish a national voter registration system designed to end some of the controversies over bloated voter rolls and improper state actions to cleanse them.

Eligible citizens who interact with government agencies, such as applying for a driver's license or veterans' benefits, would be automatically registered to vote unless they decline. The agencies would transfer the voter registration information electronically to state elections officials.

Electronically, 36 states plus the District of Columbia have adopted the system at local motor vehicle offices. And 38 states plus D.C. allow online voter registration and enable voters to check and update their records on a secure online portal.

The off-proposed plan to create a small-donor public financing system is a likely nonstarter due to fierce Republican opposition. Unfortunately, so too is requiring corporations, labor organizations, Super PACs and other groups spending in elections to disclose their donors.

By putting election reform atop their legislative agenda, and pledging measures to fix Obamacare, curb drug prices and improve the nation's decaying infrastructure, Democrats have vowed to legislate as well as investigate with their newly won power.

Carl P. Leubsdorf is a former Washington bureau chief of The Dallas Morning News.

## Take care to help veterans who care for others too

By RUTH STEIN  
Special to Stars and Stripes

**T**he Department of Veterans Affairs' noble motto, "It's good for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan," calls on all of us to care for the men and women who have served our country. Too often, we think about veterans for only one day a year, Veterans Day. But we should contemplate our veterans' sacrifices and recommend to our duty to care for them in return — long after Nov. 11. While the programs that can support that commitment change from year to year, the challenges vets too often face remain the same and we must do better to give them the respect they deserve.

This year, the VA begins its yearslong expansion of the program that provides monetary assistance to family caregivers of post-9/11 veterans seriously injured in the line of duty to those caring for eligible veterans of all eras, including the elderly. This is a welcome change for those who work with elderly vets and know their struggles in obtaining long-term care with limited financial means. Yet as an attorney with LegalHealth, who staffs an on-site free legal clinic for older veterans at the Manhattan and Bronx VA hospitals in New York, I find far too many veteran clients who are seeking services not only for themselves, but care for others.

One such client came to LegalHealth seeking to prepare a will to protect his

wife, children and grandchildren after his passing. Though separated from his wife at the time, he wanted to ensure she would inherit his belongings and any savings at the time of his passing, and to see that his adult child who had the least support caring for her children would inherit his car. In preparing his will, he reflected on a lifetime of trauma — beginning in childhood upon separation from his family in Puerto Rico, and culminating in combat in Vietnam where he suffered post-traumatic stress disorder now recognized through his disability compensation from the VA — and wondered whether he had always been a good family man in light of the psychological damage he suffered. He also expressed the love he has found in serving as a caregiver for his young grandchild and the healing he has experienced in this role.

My client's concern for his loved ones is no surprise to those familiar with veterans' culture and veterans' challenges. In looking at the difficulties servicemembers face transitioning from the military, veterans often find themselves with a loss of camaraderie, brotherhood and sisterhood, and unconditional devotion: the sense among their battle buddies and friends that they are ready to sacrifice for one another at any time. Indeed, I have found working with older veterans that I am not simply serving those who served but carrying out my clients' wishes to care for others — their desire to see their friends and family are protected, secure and not

overburdened. Each day, veterans come to LegalHealth to ask how spouses, children, grandchildren, friends, family and significant others can be cared for throughout their old age and after their death, through wills, survivors' benefits, home care, housing rights and more.

The time is upon us to do more than simply honor our veterans. We must now focus our efforts on enacting real policy changes that will benefit our veterans and their families. The expanded caregiver program is one positive step by Congress toward the VA's mission of caring for veterans, and it is something in which we can be proud. Much more will be needed, such as addressing the VA Office of Inspector General's concerns about the caregiver program's operations, and continuing to support our VA medical centers, which, based on Rand Corp.'s 2018 study sponsored by the New York State Health Foundation, are uniquely positioned among health care providers to meet veterans' particular needs.

Yet I encourage us to also remember what my legal work has shown me — that in helping our older veterans, we are not simply caring for those who have borne the battle on our behalf; we are finally joining their brotherhood and sisterhood in a mission to protect, serve and care for their friends, family and loved ones.

Ruth Stein is an attorney with the Older Veterans Legal Clinics at the Bronx and Manhattan VA and the New York Legal Assistance Group.

## OPINION

## What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

## Atmosphere of scary scenarios in climate change report

**The Washington Post**  
If you did not know about the major new federal climate change report, the Trump administration will be pleased. The report was released the day after Thanksgiving — when many people were distracted — probably because it contradicts practically everything President Donald Trump has said and done on global warming. The Fourth National Climate Assessment is yet another reminder that reality will catch up to the United States, no matter how much the president tries to ignore and deny it.

The world is heating up, and there are no "credible natural" explanations for this amount of warming, says the report. Greenhouse-gas emissions have decreased a bit lately. But they need to go down much further and faster to avoid dire consequences.

Already, the nation is seeing "intensifying droughts, increasing heavy downpours, reducing snowpack," as well as "declines in insect and water quality." A severe course change, increasingly depleted ground water, rising seas and other effects will make it more difficult to farm and provide enough water for large cities. Foodborne and waterborne diseases will spread. Disease-carrying ticks and mosquitoes will spread to communities, and they will cause more deaths. Wildfires and insect infestations will overwhelm U.S. forests. Sea ice will melt and coral reef ecosystems will dissolve. Power outages and fuel shortages will be more frequent. Roads and bridges will swamp. Pipelines will become unsafe. Watershed property will be increasingly unusable. Fisheries will dwindle.

"Even if significant emissions reductions occur, many of the effects from sea level rise over this century — and particularly through mid-century — are already locked in due to historical emissions," the report explains, underscoring the necessity of asking communities to prepare. On the horizon is "the potential need for millions of people and billions of dollars of coastal infrastructure to be relocated."

Critics of acting on climate change often cite the possible economic costs. But not acting has costs, too. The experts expect the country's largest loss to be the economy throughout this century," finding that "with continued growth in emissions at historic rates, annual losses in some economic sectors are projected to reach hundreds of billions of dollars by the end of the century — more than the current gross domestic product of many U.S. states."

The White House responded to the report by misrepresenting scientists' work and promising "fuller information" in the next analysis. Cooking the next report will not change the facts. Trump and the Republican Party have been negligent stewards of the country's irreplaceable resources. Future Americans will not forgive or forget what these "leaders" did.

## GM's proactive move painful for workers, but justified

**The Wall Street Journal**  
President Donald Trump's moves he can command markets like King Canute thought he could the tides. But General Motors has again exposed the inability of any politician to arrest the changes in technology and consumer tastes roiling the auto industry.

GM said it plans to eliminate 15 percent of its salaried workforce in North America



and stop production at five plants that employ 6,700 workers. "We are taking these actions now while the company and the economy are strong to stay in front of a fast-changing market," CEO Mary Barra said.

The U.S. automaker plans to redeploy some \$4.5 billion in annual savings to more profitable truck, electric car and autonomous vehicle manufacturing. Investors cheered by bidding up GM's stock, but the president reacted like a spurned suitor.

As a candidate Trump lambasted Ford for shifting production to Mexico, then took credit when the company announced it would keep its Lincoln MKC in Louisville, Ky. But both decisions were motivated by market changes, and so is GM's.

GM is halting production at plants that make sedans including the Chevy Cruze, Impala and Volt hybrid. Americans are buying more trucks and SUVs amid lower gas prices and better fuel efficiency. Small cars make up a third of U.S. vehicle sales, compared with half in 2012. About 75 percent of GM sales last year were trucks and crossovers, up from 60 percent in 2012. Its share of the small-car market has also fallen by a third in a decade amid Japanese and Korean competition.

The main driver of GM's failure a decade ago was its uncompetitive labor contracts. Rather than reduce costs or idle unproductive plants, GM offered bigger discounts to govt. sales. But the market tides still rolled in, and GM executives have learned that staying competitive is necessary to avoid another collapse.

The Trump administration deserves credit for giving automakers flexibility to make more of the cars consumers want by relaxing corporate average fuel-economy standards. GM's third-quarter profit in North America surged 37 percent even as U.S. sales fell due to strong demand for pricier pick-ups and SUVs.

Boosting production of higher-margin vehicles is imperative as auto sales flatten after eight years of robust growth and rising interest rates curb demand. Material costs have also increased due to Trump's steel and aluminum tariffs. GM said in July the tariffs could raise its costs by as much as \$700 million this year.

Trump and liberals howling about layoffs ignore that GM is steering more investment toward electric and autonomous vehicles. Electric cars make up only about 1 percent of U.S. auto sales and often sell at a loss though they could become more popular as batteries improve. But China is GM's largest market, and it sold a third more cars there than in the U.S. last year. Beijing has set electric-car quotas, and to be competitive GM has little choice but to make cars in China. All the more so after Beijing raised tariffs on U.S.-made cars to 40 percent from 15 percent in retaliation for Trump's tariffs.

GM is also betting that autonomous cars

will become the rage as millennials and aging baby boomers give up the wheel.

Trump and Democrats seem to believe that with the right mix of tariffs and managed trade they can return to a U.S. economy built on steel and autos. This is the logic behind the administration stipulating in its new trade agreement with Mexico and Canada that 40 to 45 percent of a vehicle's value must consist of parts made by workers earning at least \$16 an hour.

But an economy doesn't run on nostalgia. U.S. automakers don't fear the new wage mandate because engineering performed by higher-skilled U.S. employees accounts for ever more of a vehicle's value. GM could soon become as much a tech company as a manufacturer.

Trump thinks his trade machinations can overrule the realities of the marketplace, but he's as wrong as Barack Obama was about the climate and regulation. Fine with us if he wants to end subsidies for all car companies. But if he intervenes to make GM less competitive, Trump will merely hurt more workers.

## Complex concerns in the era of genetically edited babies

**Los Angeles Times**

It has long been a scientific dream: to inoculate people against terrible diseases before they're born. Now a team of doctors based in China has dangled that possibility in front of us by claiming it has edited the DNA of two human embryos during in vitro fertilization. The goal of the project was to protect the two (who are now twin baby girls) from HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

If this was intended to be a gift to the world, though, it came in ugly wrapping. The principal investigator didn't bother with such scientific protocols as peer review and publishing in a respected journal. Instead, he made claims about his results informally to a colleague at a conference, granted an interview to The Associated Press and posted a video on YouTube. He offered no evidence or independent corroboration that his experiment succeeded.

And if indeed it did take place as described, it unquestionably crossed all sorts of ethical and safety lines.

The reaction was explosive. The hospital named in documents filed by researcher He Jiankui says that neither the research nor the birth of the twins happened there. The Chinese government, though it has not outlawed genetic experimentation on human embryos, launched an investigation into the ethics of the project. More than 100 Chinese scientists issued a statement condemning He's actions.

Until now, research on gene editing has been restricted to faulty embryos in cases in which it was clear that children would be born with horrible illnesses. Even then, such research has been hotly debated, as it

should be. While it is tremendously exciting to think that researchers might be able one day to switch off genes that predispose people to breast cancer, say, or Alzheimer's disease, gene editing raises all sorts of other troubling questions. Even leaving aside people's worries about eugenics and genetically designed superbabies bred for certain looks or athletic skills, there's also the fact that gene editing isn't just another treatment for an individual; it's a process that changes the human genome; if successful, it will be passed on to future generations and spread through the population.

In some cases, that could be a good thing. But there could also be unintended consequences that might more than offset any positive effects. Gene editing can accidentally change genes other than those targeted in ways scientists can't foresee.

The ethical (and practical) concerns raised by such experiments are complex and far reaching. For instance, if lifesaving or life-lengthening gene editing becomes more widely available, who should be allowed to benefit from it? Will it be restricted, at least in its early years, to only the wealthy who would be able to afford it?

And this: If people live considerably longer lives, how would that affect the size of the world's population? How many more ger-living older generations be supported?

Now, He said, society can begin discussing how far such research should be allowed to go. On the contrary, the time for that discussion was before he undertook his experimentation on humans. And indeed, last year, a panel with members from scientific organizations and the world recommended against the implantation of gene-edited human embryos until the various aspects were better understood.

Of course, it's hoped that one day, when our knowledge of gene editing and its consequences is deeper, we won't need such restrictions.

## Boeing, Lion Air owe all airline passengers transparency

**Chicago Sun-Times**

Airline passengers are demanding convincing proof from Boeing that all its planes are safe.

Investigators are still piecing together what happened on Oct. 29 when a Lion Air 737 MAX 8 jet plunged nose-down into the Java Sea. Chicago-based Boeing insists its 737 MAX 8 is as safe as any other plane and that the crash was caused by pilot error.

But when it takes a nose-dive into an ocean and 189 people are killed, reassurances from the corporate flaks won't suffice. The single biggest question: Did flaws in the 737 MAX 8's automated anti-stall technology — a prime feature of this latest model — lead the popular 737 — contribute to the crash?

Investigators say it's still "too early" to tell. But it's surely troubling that the new Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System, designed to automatically lower the aircraft's nose when sensors determine that a plane is ascending too steeply, was found to be malfunctioning and sent the plane plunging.

Even as the desperate pilots tried repeatedly — 26 times — to pull it up.

Was Boeing aware of this potential malfunction? If so, when did the company become aware? What steps did Boeing take to fix the problem? And, finally, the flight jet? Was sufficient pilot training provided in how to deactivate the MCAS when necessary?

Meanwhile, there are questions for Lion Air, too. Did Lion, the largest budget airline in Indonesia, properly maintain its fleet? Did it have the right pilots on the flight that similar problems with the anti-stall technology had occurred with this plane before? Were all Lion Air pilots trained in how to override the MCAS?

Investigators suspect there were problems on all these fronts. For our safety and their reputations, Boeing and Lion Air had better put it all out there.

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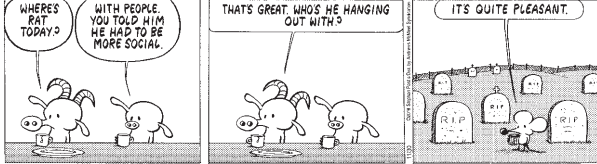
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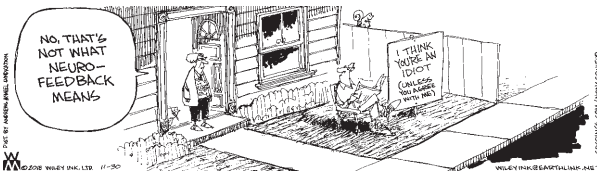
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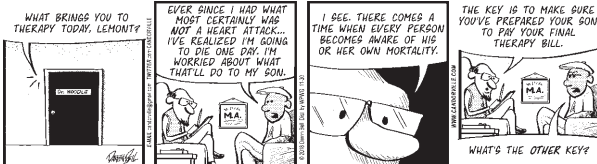
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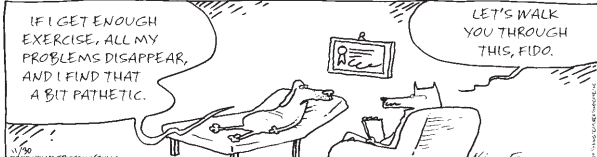
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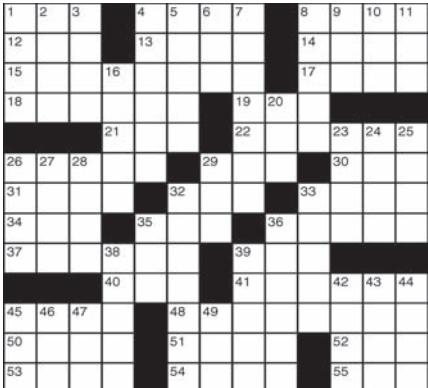
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Bizarro



### Eugene Sheffer Crossword



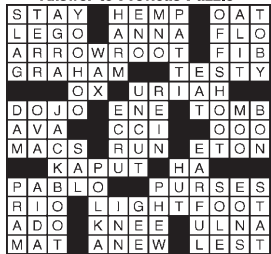
#### ACROSS

- 1 God, to Galileo
- 4 Morsels
- 8 It takes the cake
- 12 Lyricist Gershwin
- 13 Exam format
- 14 Heap
- 15 Hindu royal
- 17 Falling-out
- 18 Use a water pistol
- 19 CEO's deg.
- 21 Fish eggs
- 22 Composer Gustav
- 26 Threaded hardware
- 29 Favorite
- 30 College URL ender
- 31 Debtors' notes
- 32 — Lancelot
- 33 Bating practice area
- 34 Louvre collection
- 35 Busy insect
- 36 Goofed
- 37 Hawaiian "thank you"
- 39 Airport screening org.
- 40 Furry foot
- 41 Vinegary
- 45 Dread
- 48 Furniture wood
- 50 Hotel chain
- 51 Cupid's specialty
- 52 Ode title starter

#### DOWN

- 53 List-ending abbr.
- 54 Russian refusal
- 55 Raggedy doll
- 25 Regretted
- 26 Thailand, once
- 27 "Downton Abbey" countess
- 28 Old Testament book
- 29 Deep hole
- 32 Frosty, for one
- 33 007 portrayer Daniel
- 35 In the style of
- 36 Chaperone
- 38 Earth Day month
- 39 Western resort lake
- 42 Facts and figures
- 43 Privy to
- 44 Printer's blue
- 45 Nemesis
- 46 Ambulance VIP
- 47 Santa — winds
- 49 Author Tan

#### Answer to Previous Puzzle



11-30

#### CRYPTOQUIP

G W N V A G Y M Y V I S V B N V F  
F H R Y S H M A F A V Y B L V F N L V  
G A V G , G R H E G Y V I B J G C E V F

"NLCZ CZ GJJ ZH ZHFFVY!"  
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: ACCLAIMED NOVELIST WHO PERPETUALLY BEHAVED LIKE HE WAS ABOUT TWELVE YEARS OLD: MARK TWEEEN.  
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: I equals X



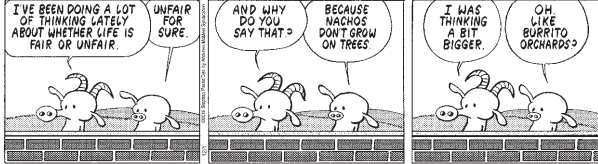
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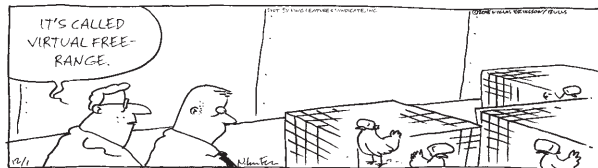
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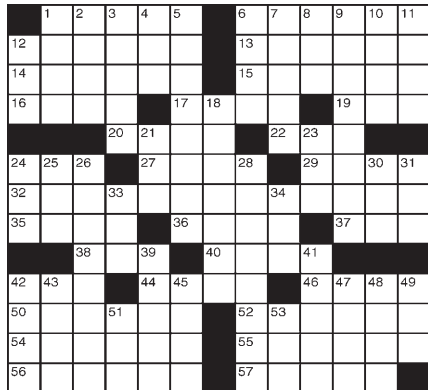
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# Eugene Sheffer Crossword



## ACROSS

- Underneath
- Tavern tally
- Ohio city
- Ancient Greek state
- Dull lecturer
- Holt of NBC News
- Fax
- Mr. Kringle
- Enzyme suffix
- "Star Trek" helmsman
- Sunbather's goal
- AOL, for one
- High tennis shots
- Pickling herb
- Practically silent
- Denomination
- Nitwit
- Wet dirt
- Do sums
- Bator
- CIA operative
- Sparkling Italian wine
- Eye part
- Barnard grad
- Write down, as music
- Elkixirs
- Use mouthwash

- Stockholm natives
- Toaster's word

## DOWN

- Drill
- Carolina college
- Gives temporary sch.
- Started
- Poetic tribute
- Set of office tasks
- Part of TNT
- "This is only —" exams
- ACLJ issues
- Strong metal
- High cards
- Naked
- QB's goals
- Erases
- Last (Abbr.)
- Turn the soil
- Back talk
- Sitar music
- "— do for now"
- Observe
- Central
- Desk wood

## Answer to Previous Puzzle



## 12-1

## CRYPTOQUIP

XYJX YJSQ FJHDB ADQIWQ  
YJQNHG WEWQ ODEWF  
JQDRBN. YW FWWOF HSIW  
XYW ADQHN'F FXSHHWFX  
FXGHSFX.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: AFTER AN UNEXPECTED DOWNPOUR DRENCHED THE AREA, A WOMAN EXCLAIMED "THIS IS ALL SO SODDEN!"

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Y equals H



## NBA/NHL

## Around the league

## So far, NBA season difficult to explain

By BRIAN MAHONEY

Associated Press

Under the former NBA schedule, the first month of the season would just be coming to a close this week.

The earlier start that the league went to last year, with the regular season beginning two weeks sooner, means some teams are now already more than a quarter of the way through their 82-game schedules.

The extra time doesn't make it any easier to explain things so far.

The Clippers and Nuggets are up. Houston and Boston are down. Golden State has already been both, flying out to a fast start that quickly came to a halt after Stephen Curry was hurt.

The restructured schedule, done to build in more opportunities for rest and fewer back-to-back games, trimmed the preseason and reduced the number of exhibition games, in some cases forcing coaches to continue tinkering around Thanksgiving when they'd prefer to be done with by Halloween.

Just like every team in the league, in November you're not going to be the same team as you are in April or May." Portland coach Terry Stotts said. "So you kind of expand your play list a little bit."

Eleven teams in the Western Conference are .500 or better, and that list doesn't include the usually automatic San Antonio Spurs. The Clippers, Denver and Memphis are all in the top five spots after missing the playoffs last season.

The experimenting figures to continue for the Celtics, who had to readjust to having Kyrie Irving and Gordon Hayward, and the Rockets, who had to replace Trevor Ariza and Luc Mbah a Moute. Both teams start the final week of November at .500 after falling a game short of the NBA Finals last season.

Then there's the Clippers, perhaps the surprise of the league and percentage points ahead of the Warriors for the best record in the West. The team that once boasted a starting lineup that included Chris Paul, Blake Griffin and DeAndre Jordan now fields a much more anonymous starting lineup but with excellent results.

Can that continue? Like plenty else around the NBA this far, it appears too early to tell.

"I think we can beat anyone," Clippers coach Doc Rivers said, "but I think we can lose to anyone."

## Butler does it

The scouting report on Jimmy Butler after just a short time in Philadelphia should be now be obvious: Don't let him take the difficult, winning three-pointer from the right wing.

## NBA schedule

## Eastern Conference

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Boston	11	10	.524	6½
Brooklyn	8	14	.364	10
New York	6	16	.274	11½

## Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Charlotte	11	10	.524	—
Orlando	10	12	.455	1½
Washington	8	13	.381	3
Miami	13	9	.591	3½
Atlanta	5	17	.227	6½

## Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	15	6	.714	—
Indiana	13	8	.619	2
Atlanta	8	13	.381	7
Chicago	5	16	.238	10½
Cleveland	4	16	.200	10½

## Western Conference

## Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Memphis	12	8	.600	—
San Antonio	11	9	.550	½
New Orleans	11	11	.500	2
Houston	10	11	.476	2½
Dallas	8	11	.421	3

## Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Denver	14	7	.667	—
Oklahoma City	13	7	.650	½
Portland	8	8	.500	1½
Minnesota	11	11	.500	3
Utah	10	12	.455	4½

## Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Clippers	14	6	.700	—
Golden State	15	5	.750	—
L.A. Lakers	11	9	.550	3
Sacramento	10	10	.500	4
Phoenix	8	12	.400	10½

## Wednesday's games

Charlotte 108, Atlanta 93	Philadelphia 117, New York 91
Utah 101, Brooklyn 91	Dallas 129, Houston 108
Milwaukee 116, Chicago 113	San Antonio 108, Memphis 99
New Orleans 125, Washington 104	Portland 115, Orlando 83
Portland 115, Orlando 83	L.A. Clippers 115, Phoenix 99

## Thursday's games

Golden State at Toronto	New Jersey at Washington
Indiana at L.A. Lakers	L.A. Clippers at Sacramento
Chicago at Detroit	Friday's games

## Friday's games

Utah at Charlotte	Atlanta at Oklahoma City
Houston at San Antonio	New Orleans at Miami
Dallas at L.A. Lakers	Orlando at Phoenix
Dallas at L.A. Lakers	Denver at Portland

## Saturday's games

Milwaukee at New York	Brooklyn at Washington
Golden State at Detroit	Tampa Bay at Minnesota
Toronto at Cleveland	Indiana at Sacramento

## Sunday's games

Phoenix at L.A. Lakers	San Antonio at Charlotte
Utah at Miami	Memphis at Philadelphia
San Antonio at Dallas	Portland at San Antonio

## Calendar

Jan. 5 — 10-day contracts can be signed.  
Feb. 7 — Trade deadline, 3 p.m. EST.

He's already won a pair of games for the 76ers from nearly the identical spot on the floor. After beating the Hornets in overtime in Charlotte on Nov. 17, he won another again Sunday in a game in Brooklyn that Philadelphia trailed by 20 points.

Next time the 76ers face that situation, count on Butler wanting to get back to his favorite location. But maybe he shouldn't wait until then.

"I can't think if I get there at any point in time in the game," he said, "I could make a lot of shots."

## NHL scoreboards

## Eastern Conference

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Buffalo	25	17	6	2	34	78	63
Toronto	26	18	8	0	36	93	67
Tampa Bay	25	17	7	1	35	77	61
Boston	24	13	7	4	30	67	59
Montreal	25	12	10	3	27	65	67
Detroit	25	11	11	3	25	72	83
Ottawa	25	10	12	3	23	89	107
Florida	23	9	10	4	22	75	84

## Metropolitan Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Washington	24	14	8	2	31	84	74
Columbus	24	14	8	2	30	84	78
N.Y. Rangers	23	13	10	0	29	75	76
Carolina	24	12	9	3	27	65	67
N.Y. Islanders	23	12	9	2	26	72	68
Pittsburgh	24	10	9	5	28	81	69
New Jersey	23	9	10	4	22	68	76
Philadelphia	24	10	12	2	22	72	86

## Western Conference

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Nashville	25	17	7	1	35	83	61
St. Louis	25	15	9	1	34	89	70
Minnesota	24	14	8	2	30	78	67
Dallas	26	13	9	3	29	72	70
San Jose	23	13	8	2	28	77	66
Chicago	25	9	11	5	23	68	90
St. Louis	25	12	9	4	29	70	77

## Central Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Calgary	24	12	9	3	30	84	73
San Jose	26	12	9	5	29	80	82
Anaheim	27	12	10	5	29	72	77
Vegas	23	11	11	1	24	73	69
Vancouver	27	11	13	3	25	78	96
Edmonton	24	11	11	2	24	77	86
Arizona	23	11	12	2	22	57	65
Los Angeles	24	9	14	1	21	64	84

NOTE: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

## Tuesday's games

Buffalo 3, San Jose 2, OT	Edmonton 4, Philadelphia 3
Calgary 3, Tampa Bay 1	Anaheim 2, Montreal 1
Pittsburgh 4, Winnipeg 3	Vegas 8, Chicago 0
Colorado 3, Nashville 2	Arizona 4, Minnesota 3
Edmonton 1, Dallas 0, OT	Los Angeles 2, Vancouver 1, OT

## Wednesday's games

Detroit 4, Los Angeles 3	Anaheim 5, Florida 2
San Jose 3, Dallas 2	Dallas 4, Calgary 3, OT
St. Louis 6, Pittsburgh 3	Thursday's games

## Thursday's games

N.Y. Islanders at Boston	Minnesota at Columbus
N.Y. Rangers at Ottawa	Chicago at Tampa Bay
Edmonton at Nashville	Chicago at Winnipeg
Los Angeles at Nashville	Los Angeles at Edmonton
Vegas at Vancouver	Friday's games

## Friday's games

Buffalo at Florida	New Jersey at Washington
Anaheim at Carolina	San Jose at Calgary
San Jose at Calgary	St. Louis at Colorado

## Saturday's games

San Jose at Tampa Bay	Dallas at Vancouver
Calgary at Montreal	Toronto at Minnesota
Winnipeg at New York	Columbus vs. N.Y. Islanders at Nassau
Washington Memorial	Tampa Bay at Florida
Philadelphia at Pittsburgh	Detroit at Boston

## Sunday's games

St. Louis at Arizona	Chicago at Nashville
Vegas at Edmonton	Anaheim at Washington
Winnipeg at N.Y. Rangers	Calgary at Chicago
San Jose at Montreal	Colorado at Carolina
Carolina at Los Angeles	Leaders

## Goal scoring

Name, Team	GP	G
Patrick Kane, Winnipeg	25	19
Jeff Skinner, Boston	24	19
David Pastrnak, Boston	25	18
Blake Wheeler, Colorado	24	18
Alex Ovechkin, Washington	24	18
Yves Deshaies, Colorado	26	17
John Tavares, Toronto	26	17
Joe Pavanello, Tampa Bay	25	16
Cam Atkinson, Columbus	25	15
Gabriel Landeskog, Colorado	25	15
Phil Forsberg, Minnesota	25	15
Sidney Crosby, Pittsburgh	24	13
Evan Drastich, Edmonton	24	13
Patrick Kane, Chicago	24	13
Connor McDavid, Edmonton	24	13
Tommy Meier, San Jose	25	13

## Plus/Minus

Name, Team	GP	+/-
Gabriel Landeskog, Colorado	25	17
Ryan McDonagh, Tampa Bay	25	17
John Tavares, Toronto	26	16
Ron Hainsey, Toronto	26	16
Mikko Rantanen, Colorado	25	16
Connor Siessons, Nashville	25	14
Tyson Barrie, Colorado	25	14
Nathan MacKinnon, Colorado	25	14
Phil Forsberg, Nashville	25	12
Mark Giordano, Calgary	25	12
Evan Drastich, Edmonton	25	12
Kasper Kapuran, Toronto	24	12
Brayden Point, Tampa Bay	26	12
Morgan Rielly, Toronto	26	12



JEFF MCINTOSH, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Head coach Gerard Gallant apparently knew what he was talking about when he insisted the Vegas Golden Knights would be fine once they found their rhythm. After a poor start this season, Vegas has won four straight to move above .500 for the first time.

## Vegas' Gallant shows patience

By W.G. RAMIREZ

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Gerard Gallant insisted over the first two months of the season that the Vegas Golden Knights would be fine once they found their rhythm and re-established the type of chemistry that led them to the Stanley Cup Final last season.

Apparently, Gallant knew what he was talking about.

Vegas has won a season-high four straight after trouncing the Blackhawks 8-3 on Tuesday night. The Golden Knights (13-12) are right back in the playoff race after sitting near the bottom of the Western Conference less than two weeks ago.

"It was a tough start and we were battling through it," Gallant said this week. "We had a terrific year last year. We had a short summer because we went to the Stanley Cup Final and ... most of the time your team falls back a little bit. You've got to have patience with your team."

Patience is something center Jonathan Marchessault said the 35-year-old, sport-spoken coach has always had, from their time together in Florida and now in Las Vegas. Marchessault said Gallant's top priority always has been to assure his players he has faith in them.

"That's the culture he wants to bring; it's kind of hard to believe, but he did stay the same," Marchessault said. "A lot of guys in his position, I think, would have been more impatient with the team, but he stuck with what he believes and right now we're having a good stretch. He knew it was just a matter of time that we get started. And right now, we're playing some good hockey."

Goaltender Marc-Andre Fleury has won his last five starts. After ranking near the bottom of

the league with its offensive production, Vegas has won five of six by outscoring its opponents 25-8 in the victories.

The emergence of Alex Tuch, Cody Eakin and newcomer Pacioretty on the second line has bolstered the team's offense. The biggest surprise has been Eakin, who had two goals and an assist in the victory over the Blackhawks.

Eakin has 10 goals and six assists in 23 games after he had 11 goals and 16 assists all of last season. The eighth-year pro said Gallant's approach has helped his confidence, which is why he has been able to take advantage of his time on the second line while Erik Haula recovers from a lower-body injury.

"It's important when you're going through a tough little start to let the players kind of figure it out themselves instead of over-coaching," Eakin said. "It comes from the top, getting those opportunities and just taking it and skating with it. You have to just be confident in yourself to do it. When things are going good you want to kind of ride the wave."

Gallant said the Knights have found the rhythm he was looking for since the start of the season, when they opened up with five of their first six and 11 of 18 on the road.

Most importantly, he said, is how well the Knights have played against the Pacific Division. Vegas has the best record among all eight teams, going 6-1-1 thus far, including Fleury's back-to-back shutouts wins over Calgary and San Jose last weekend.

"You look at our division, I don't think it's got off to a great start in our whole division, but I think there's a lot of good teams and I compare our team to the other teams and if we play like we're playing each other, we're right there," Gallant said.



## HIGH SCHOOL: DODEA EUROPE

# Defending hoops champs Ramstein, BFA strong again

BY GREGORY BROOME  
Stars and Stripes

The 2018-19 DODEA Europe basketball regular season begins Friday with a busy slate that includes an epic Division I road trip and an opening-weekend gathering of four of the organization's smallest schools.

The opening-weekend action is the first step towards determining six divisional champions at the European tournaments, scheduled for Feb. 20-23 at Wiesbaden.

## Boys

**Division I:** Nobody in this division has the kind of championship experience enjoyed by the Ramstein Royals. Probably because nobody else has won championships recently.

Ramstein is chasing its fifth straight European championship this winter; if successful, the Royals will match the DODEA Europe record held by now-closed Heidelberg. They'll pursue that historic mark behind a seasoned group of players, including four returnees from the team that edged Kaiserslautern 46-45 in last year's title-game comeback triumph. Reigning Stars and Stripes boys basketball Athlete of the Year Naser Eaves anchors the frontcourt, while junior point guard JJ Little headlines the backcourt.

The runner-up Raiders will attempt to rally from their heartbreaking defeat to the archival Raiders, while semifinalists Stuttgart and Wiesbaden look to take one further step to the championship game. Senior point guard Tyrese Harris is an accomplished playmaker and key to Wiesbaden's high-pressure defense.

**Division II:** The Black Forest Academy Falcons and Rota Admirals renewed their long-term rivalry last winter with another classic meeting, this one a 48-47 BFA win for the 2017-18 European championship.

Both of those established powers figure to remain formidable this season, though neither will get the chance to show much before the holiday break. Rota, led by the dynamic backcourt of Antonio White and LJ Chester, won't play a DODEA Europe game until it hosts Aviano on Jan. 18; BFA's opening-weekend set against Baumholder this weekend is its only DODEA Europe action until Jan. 11.

Aviano, last year's third-place finisher, will get more early reps as it continues to pursue its championship-game breakthrough. The Saints, led by 6-foot-3 senior Jaylon Smith, play doubleheaders against Florence and Signella in December.

**Division III:** After years hunting a championship, the Baumholder Bucs will play the role of the hunted this season after they

bested Brussels 35-28 in overtime for a long-deferred small-school title last winter.

Among the Bucs' pursuers are the runner-up Brigands, returning semifinalists Ansbach and Hohenfels and recently dethroned champion Signella, and that dangerous group grew even scarier this fall when Spangdahlem was realigned from Division II to III. The Sentinels' set of four returning players, including the wing duo of senior Javian Rouse and junior Deon Montgomery, could make immediate noise in the small-school ranks.

## Girls

**Division I:** There are only two weeks of regular-season basketball games before DODEA Europe adjourns for a month-long holiday sabbatical. But those two weeks will pack in a lot of consequential large-school girls competition.

This weekend's opening slate includes matchups between two sets of German rivals as Kaiserslautern visits Vilseck and Ramstein takes on Wiesbaden, while two-time defending champion Stuttgart travels north to Belgium to take on SHAPE. Furthermore, Lakenheath will jump right into the grueling DODEA Europe travel grind with a long trip to Italy and a date with returning runner-up Naples.

Italy is a hoops hotbed again the next weekend, as Vicenza hosts Naples, Stuttgart and Vilseck for a four-team Division I meet to wrap up the 2018 portion of the season's schedule.

Stuttgart, helmed by star senior point guard Adan Maher, is the team to beat again despite some costly personnel losses, while Naples and 2017-18 semifinalists Vilseck and Ramstein are planning on similarly deep runs this season. And two recent

championship programs might be due for a senior-led resurgence - the duo of guard Savannah Benson-China and 6-4 forward Allison Urick gives Wiesbaden the foundation for a strong winter, while Kaiserslautern standout Le'Jhanique Brown will again lead the Raiders.

**Division II:** The Black Forest Academy Falcons were runaway champions last winter, culminating in a 36-10 romp in the Division II title game. And even that final opponent, Spangdahlem, is no longer a concern, having been shuffled to Division III this fall.

That leaves the Falcons, with senior standouts Beca Losey, Kennedy Wilbanks and Jessie Campbell back for another run, a prohibitive favorite for a fourth straight championship. It also places the onus on the remaining Division II field to produce a new threat.

AFNORTH is a candidate for that role, with freshman guard Victoria Morris adding a fresh weapon to the perimeter attack of senior Josie Bosch and sophomore Ashley Bailey, as is Bahrain, a strong third-place finisher a year ago that will enjoy a welcome set of regular-season DODEA Europe dates to prepare for another tournament run.

**Division III:** The two-time defending champion Signella Jaguars aren't making things any easier on the small-school teams hoping to unseat them. Signella returns seven players and four starters, including All-Europe stars Jessica Jacobs and Averi Chandler, for a run at a Division III three-peat.

The small-school hierarchy might settle into place early this year, as three Division III teams gather in Hohenfels this weekend and four meet at Ansbach a week later.

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Stuttgart's Adan Maher, right, passes the ball behind Naples' Roxanne Sasse during the DODEA Europe Division I championship in Wiesbaden, Germany, last February.



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL B. KELLER/Stars and Stripes

Isabelle Ploechinger makes adjustments to her rifle during the DODEA Europe Marksmanship championship in February. Ploechinger moved from Stuttgart to Kaiserslautern.

# Stuttgart's dominance could be in jeopardy

BY GREGORY BROOME  
Stars and Stripes

Both of the Stuttgart Panthers' winter sports dynasties are at risk as the DODEA Europe season opens this weekend. One's just at a little more risk than the other.

Stuttgart's wrestling and marksmanship teams will each pursue their sixth straight championships this winter, but they'll do so under very different circumstances. While the Panthers' wrestling team is packed with the depth and experience they've enjoyed throughout their half-decade reign, the school's marksmanship program is starting over.

None of the members of last year's senior-heavy marksmanship squad are back this year, leaving seasoned coach Raul Pinon and a group entirely composed of first-year shooters, including sophomore team captain Karla Redolosa, to carry the burden of the Panthers' historic success.

One proven Panther champion remains active in DODEA Europe competition, albeit for a different school. Junior Isabella Ploechinger, a key member of the 2017-18 Panthers title squad and the individual runner-up at last year's European finals, makes the switch to Kaiserslautern to boost the Raiders' steadily rising program.

"This is probably the best starting varsity I've ever had," said Kaiserslautern coach Robert Meyer of a group that also includes experienced performers Julianna Hosey and MacKenzie Cuellar. "We are very optimistic about this year."

The Panthers host Eastern conference rivals Ansbach, Hohenfels, Vicenza and Vilseck to open the season Saturday, while the Raiders join Alconbury, SHAPE, Spangdahlem and 2017-18 team runner-up Wiesbaden at Baumholder for the first Western conference meet at Baumholder. Wiesbaden hosts the European championship meet Feb. 2.

The Stuttgart wrestling squad, meanwhile, will face plenty of challenges this fall, but a dearth of proven leaders doesn't figure to be among them.

Benjamin Fielding and John Carroll are both seniors, multiple-

time European champions and former Stars and Stripes wrestling Athletes of the Year, giving head coach Norm Matzke a very solid foundation to extend the Panthers' reign. Fielding has won European crowns at 120, 126 and 132 pounds over his first three seasons, and will look to complete that pattern with a championship at 138 pounds this winter. Carroll is eyeing a third heavyweight title.

The Panthers will open the regular season on the turf of their most consistent rival, the Ramstein Royals, in a seven-team Saturday meet that also includes Baumholder, Berlin, Hohenfels, Vilseck and Wiesbaden. Ramstein boasts a pair of reigning champions in Andres Hart and Kaiserslautern transfer Conner Mackie, but coach Thomas Wright said the Royals overall are a "very young team with limited experience."

Vilseck, which enjoyed a solid fourth-place showing last winter, brings back a core of 2017-18 European qualifiers, including third-place 113-pound finisher Johnathan Alvarado, and welcomes a pair of Colorado transfers in senior Tony Llamido and freshman Jada Llamido.

The depth of European competition isn't limited to Germany, as season-opening meets at Lakenheath and Aviano will demonstrate Saturday.

Lakenheath, a reliable contender in recent years, fields a sturdy squad featuring 12 returning wrestlers and led by juniors Joey Glenk, Devin Laroya, Nick Scifo and Philip Severance. The Lancers host Division I rivals Kaiserslautern and SHAPE along with small schools AFNORTH, Alconbury, Brussels and Spangdahlem on Saturday.

Reigning Division II team champion Aviano opens the Italian schedule against Naples, Signella, Vicenza and Spanish visitor Rota. Vicenza has a 16-deep roster bookended by senior 160-pounder William Paulk and sophomore heavyweight Joshua Whitman.

The regular season runs through Feb. 2, including a month-long break for the holidays. Sectional qualifiers follow on Feb. 9, leading up to the European championship meet Feb. 15-16 at Wiesbaden.

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL



RICHARD SHIRO/AP

Clemson's Tavien Feaster, center, rushes for a touchdown while defended by South Carolina players during the second half last week. The No. 2 Tigers face Pitt in the ACC championship on Saturday.

## ACC mismatch? Not so fast

Pitt has given No. 2 Clemson problems, giving it hope in title game

By PETE IACOBELLI  
Associated Press

CLEMSON, S.C. — Neither Clemson coach Dabo Swinney nor Pitt's Pat Narduzzi sees the Atlantic Coast Conference championship game as a looming blow-out, no matter how many others do.

The second-ranked Tigers (CFP No. 2) come in on a major roll, the ACC Atlantic champions capping their second 12-0 season since 2015 with a satisfying, 56-35 victory over state rival South Carolina on Saturday night.

"We really have had a historic season, not just a great season," Swinney said. "A lot of first time whatever."

First-time Coastal Division winner Pitt (7-5) stumbled in its final regular-season contest, dropping a 24-3 contest at Miami, dropping out of the Top 25 — and dropping their chances, in the



ACC championship  
Clemson vs. Pitt  
AFN-Sports  
2 a.m. Sunday CET  
10 a.m. Sunday JKT

eyes of many — of staging an upset of the powerhouse Tigers.

"I think our kids understand that we're the underdog," Narduzzi said Sunday. "Turn on any TV station or ESPN they'll probably find out."

But it was Narduzzi's Panthers who own just one of two regular-season upsets of Clemson the past four seasons — the Tigers are 46-2 in the regular season during that stretch — when they went into Death Valley two years ago and defeated the nation's second-ranked team.

Narduzzi said that landmark win won't affect this week's game, although it certainly helped build his program into ACC Coastal champions.

When you can topple a highly ranked opponent, Narduzzi said, "it gives your kids the belief that what you're doing is the right stuff."

Clemson has had plenty of the right stuff since its first ACC championship season under Swinney in 2011. The Tigers have 10 or more victories each year since, have made the past three playoff fields and won the 2016 national championship less than two months after getting shocked by the Panthers.

Swinney's team has been heavy

favorites against nearly everyone they've played this year and won their final eight games by margins of 20 points or more.

"It's just business as usual," Swinney said about facing lightly regarded Pitt.

Swinney holds players to a high standard of play, the focus totally on their week of practice and not who the opponent is, where the game is played or how high the stakes.

When they don't, Swinney lets them know about it. It's why he let loose on All-America defensive tackle Christian Wilkins on Saturday night when he flashed a Heisman Trophy pose in the end zone following his 1-yard touchdown run. The celebration drew an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty and Swinney told Wilkins he'd never run the ball again if he did another selfish stunt like that.

Wilkins apologized, meaning Clemson's offensive "Fridge Package" with nearly 700 pounds of defensive tackles in Wilkins and Dexter Lawrence lining up in the backfield might make it to the ACC championship game.

"It's been a fun year," Swinney said.

Even if it hasn't always been adversity free, Swinney demoted last year's quarterback starter Kelly Bryant behind strong-armed freshman Trevor Lawrence after the fourth game and Bryant, a graduate student in his fourth season, left the program with the intent to transfer.

Former Clemson running back C.J. Fuller, 22, who was with the team last year, died suddenly in early October, shaking many of his former teammates.

Through it all, Swinney and Clemson have stayed the course to play for another league title.

## Bison sticking with strong QB tradition

By DAVE KOLPACK  
Associated Press

FARGO, N.D. — James Hendricks came to North Dakota State as a highly touted quarterback with monster numbers, eager to follow in the footsteps of Bison stars Carson Wentz and Brock Jensen.

When it became clear that Easton Stick was next in line to take over at QB, Hendricks was asked by coaches and others if he would be interested in switching positions.

"I was actually asked that question quite a bit," Hendricks said. "And I was like, 'No, absolutely not. I don't want to do that.'"

But he did. And the junior is now a standout safety, earning first-team all-Missouri Valley Football Conference honors this season. And Stick? Well, he has been quite good.

The senior who owns school records for total offense, passing touchdowns and total touchdowns will try for his 46th victory Saturday when the top-ranked Bison (11-0) begin their quest for their seventh FCS title in eight years with a home playoff game against Montana State (8-4). A victory would get him within two of the school record held by Jensen, who guided the team to FCS titles in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

While Bison coach Chris Klieman has a whopping 15 all-conference players to brag about this season, he knows the significance of the player taking the snaps.

"You look at the best teams in

the NFL and the best teams in major college football as well as FCS, they have a trigger man," Klieman said. "We're so excited because we have a guy who has been here, done this, for a number of years in the playoffs."

Klieman recalled when Stick, from Omaha, Neb., cracked the lineup as a redshirt freshman after Wentz broke his wrist. Coaches kept the passing game simple and called bootleg plays where Stick could use his running ability. Stick went 8-0 before Wentz came back for the FCS title game.

Three years later, Klieman said, Stick calls 75 percent of the plays at the line of scrimmage and makes the smallest tweaks that go unnoticed to most people in the stadium.

"Our game plan and game sheet is so much bigger now," Klieman said. "Even last year to this year I think our game sheet has continued to increase because of what he can handle."

Some observers believe Stick has the same football savvy as Wentz, now a key part of the Philadelphia Eagles.

"He does not make mistakes," Montana State coach Jeff Choate said of Stick.

While Stick could be on his way to the pros, the Bison have more quarterbacks waiting in the wings. Although not listed on the two-deep depth chart, true freshman Trey Lance already has opened some eyes with his performances in practice and two games.



CHARLIE NEIBERGAAL/AP

Easton Stick is the most recent in a long line of elite quarterbacks at North Dakota State, which begins its hunt for its seventh Football Championship Subdivision title Saturday.

## Championship games on AFN



Mountain West championship  
Fresno State at Boise State  
AFN-Sports2

1:30 a.m. Sunday CET  
9:30 a.m. Sunday JKT



AAC championship  
Memphis at Central Florida  
AFN-Sports

9:30 p.m. Saturday CET  
5:30 a.m. Sunday JKT



KEITH SRAKOGIC/AP

Pittsburgh head coach Pat Narduzzi works the sideline during a game Nov. 10 against Virginia Tech in Pittsburgh. Pitt is the fourth different Coastal Division winner Clemson has faced in the ACC championship since 2015.

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

# Bryant's return boosting Huskies

TE could be big factor in Pac-12 title game

By TIM BOOTH  
Associated Press

SEATTLE — If there was any question whether tight end Hunter Bryant was back to being the kind of difference-maker Washington expected before injuries derailed most of his first two seasons, a two-play sequence against Washington State told the story.

In a span of just seconds, Bryant flashed across the middle for a 59-yard catch-and-run in a key third-down situation in the third quarter, showing off the kind of separation speed rare for a tight end. On the next play, Bryant sold the idea he was blocking before slipping free to catch a 22-yard touchdown on a double pass.

"He's as sure-handed as they come. He's just a unique, explosive athlete. That's really what he is," Washington coach Chris Petersen said. "He's not a super tall receiver. He's not a big tight end. He's got this uniqueness to him. He's just a playmaker. He's a football player."

After spending more than half the season recovering from knee surgery in June, Bryant has provided a boost for the 10th-ranked Huskies' offense heading into Friday's Pac-12 championship game against No. 17 Utah. Bryant had three catches for 108 yards and a touchdown in the Apple Cup victory, along with the most snaps he's gotten since making his sea-



**Pac-12 championship  
Utah vs. Washington**  
AFN-Sports  
2 a.m. Saturday CET  
10 a.m. Saturday JKT

son debut earlier this month.

He'll likely be a big part of Washington's plans after missing the matchup with Utah earlier this season.

"It felt good just to be able to help my team and help us get this win. This is a really big win for us to help us do the things we want to do with our season," Bryant said after the Apple Cup victory. "I'm glad I was able to contribute and do everything I could to help us win."

Bryant was one of the premier recruits to land at Washington during Petersen's tenure. He chose to stay at home despite being courted by major programs around the country because of his unique combination of tight end size and wide receiver skills. But his career has been defined by injuries so far.

Bryant suffered a significant



ELAINE THOMPSON/AP

**Washington's Hunter Bryant, right, tries to fend off Fresno State's Jeffrey Allison on Sept. 16, 2017. After spending more than half the season recovering from knee surgery, Bryant has provided a boost for the 10th-ranked Huskies' offense heading into Friday's Pac-12 championship game against No. 17 Utah.**

injury to his left knee in late October 2017 in a game against UCLA. He sat out the rest of the regular season and returned for the Fiesta Bowl against Penn State but played only briefly. While he was limited at times, Bryant was cleared for offseason workouts and to participate in spring football, but he suffered a setback between the end of spring camp and early June. The setback required a more extensive surgery that at first made it sound like Bryant could end up missing all of 2018.

But Bryant was recovering at a pace that would allow him to play this season and the target ended

up becoming Washington's game anchor against Stanford. Of course, the Huskies would have loved to have the big tight end earlier — especially the previous week in a loss to California — but he was back on the field against the Cardinal in his first action in more than a calendar year.

It's been a slow progression since. One catch against the Cardinal; two catches against Oregon State; and finally three catches — and two crucial game-changing plays — against Washington State. As Washington offensive coordinator Bush Hamdan noted, Bryant is fresh at a time of the

year that most players are worn down.

"He runs routes like a receiver and blocks like a tight end," Washington quarterback Jake Browning said. "Just depends on the play."

Washington does face a conundrum with Bryant. If Bryant plays in both the Pac-12 title game and a bowl game as expected, he'll play one too many games this season to be able to claim a redshirt. But Bryant may not even be at Washington all four seasons if the NFL calls.

"I just want to play football," Bryant said.

## No. 24 Iowa State happy for makeup game vs. Drake

Associated Press

AMES, Iowa — No matter that the opponent is a small private school with an FCS team that does not offer athletic scholarships.

Iowa State coach Matt Campbell and his players are just happy to be playing a 12th game.

The No. 24 Cyclones will host Drake on Saturday to replace the season opener with South Dakota State that was called off because of lightning after just a few plays. Drake (7-3), a perennial contender in the Pioneer Football League, also had its opener scrubbed because of weather.

"You only get guaranteed 12 opportunities," Cyclones tight end Sam Seonbuchner said Tuesday. "You grind all year, you want to be able to take advantage of every opportunity and have all of those opportunities."

The tendency is to view the game as little more than a scrimmage for an Iowa State team that tied for third in the Big 12 and is heavily favored.

Campbell doesn't see it that way.

"To me it's not like you're playing a spring game or something



CHARLIE NEUBERG/AP

**Iowa State running back David Montgomery, left, scores on an 18-yard TD reception ahead of Kansas State defensive back Kevin McGee last week. The No. 24 Cyclones got to add a game against Drake on Saturday because of a cancellation earlier in the year.**

like that," he said. "You're going to play a game against an opponent that will come in here, their kids are going to want to play and what a great opportunity for them and us. So I think the reality of it for us is we're treating it just

like we would any other football game."

The game would seem to offer Campbell a chance to give his younger guys some playing time the road. But he insisted he has

not mapped out any scenario for working those players into the game and is more concerned about how the team as a whole develops, especially with a bowl game on the horizon.

So if he feels quarterback Brock Purdy or running back David Montgomery need more work, he'll give it to them.

"Getting that second opportunity to play 12 football games, I think we owe to our team, not just the young guys on the team but our entire team, to continue to be the best versions of ourselves we can be and then obviously, with an opportunity to play a 13th game, you want to continue to improve," Campbell said.

"I think sometimes this time of year you see teams go the other way. You want to be trending in a positive direction and I think that's what's so significant about the week of prep and the game and moving ourselves forward."

Iowa State originally had scheduled Incarnate Word for its 12th game. But Incarnate Word made the FCS playoffs, so athletic director Jamie Pollard had to look for another opponent.

Drake, located 35 miles south on Interstate 35, readily agreed to play. Drake senior defensive lineman Nathan Clayberg called it "about as much of a dream come true as you could possibly imagine" as the Bulldogs prepare for a game in front of as many as 60,000 fans.

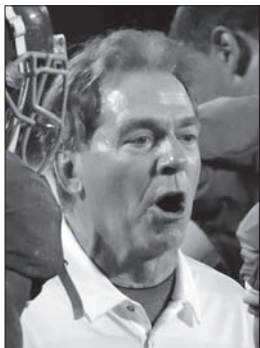
"All I said is I would have liked to play a 12th game no matter how it came up. Obviously, who and what and how, I had zero say in any of that," Campbell said. "I just appreciate that Jamie was able to get a 12th game for our football team because, again, that's what's really tricky about college football. You only get 12 guaranteed games."

Iowa State and Drake have a long history, having played each other 69 times. The most recent game was in 1985, when Drake upset the Cyclones 20-17 in Ames.

"Just happy to get another opportunity," safety Lawrence White said. "We thought last week was our last opportunity in Jack Trice, but we get one more and we just want to go out with a bang."



## COLLEGE FOOTBALL



JOHN RAOUX/AP

Alabama head coach Nick Saban and his team's typically tough defense will be challenged by No. 4 Georgia's offense in Saturday's SEC championship game.

## Rematch: SEC title game features last season's CFP finalists

### FROM FRONT PAGE

At Nick Saban and No. 1 Alabama (12-0, 8-0) on Saturday in the SEC championship game. They put on quite a show in an overtime thriller with a national title on the line back in January.

Tagovailoa came off the bench to lead a second-half comeback and returns as perhaps the Heisman Trophy front-runner.

A rematch almost seemed inevitable with both teams clearly the cream of their divisions. But Smart said, "The Alabama rematch couldn't be a focal point because 'certainly both teams had to win some football games to get to it.'"

That future-oriented mentality wouldn't fit The Process, Saban's acclaimed methodology that Smart absorbed as his long-time assistant at Alabama, LSU and the NFL's Miami Dolphins.

"I've never been around really good teams that are focused on other teams," Smart said. "The good teams I've been around are focusing on whoever they play that week. And it's really not been different for us this year."

Both teams dispatched their in-state rivals with relative ease leading up to this game. Georgia raced to a 38-7 halftime lead in a 45-21 win over Georgia Tech. The Tide struggled in the first half but ran away from Auburn, 52-21.

But they've known this meeting was coming since Nov. 3, the earliest the title game matchup has been set. Really, they've been on a collision course since that national title clash.

Saban called the Bulldogs "probably one of the most complete teams in the nation in terms of offense, defense, special teams."

Alabama has won every game since the national title game by 20-plus points, a 12-game streak that is the longest to open a season in NCAA history. The previous record of 10 consecutive 20-point wins at any point during a season was set by Boise State in 2002.

Alabama has reached the 12-win mark for the ninth time in the last 11 seasons.

The Bulldogs haven't had that kind of sustained success, but they've been awfully good the past two years.

They have won five straight by 17-plus points since dropping a similarly lopsided game to No. 12 LSU.

The reward: An Alabama rematch.

# Georgia Tech's Johnson set to retire

Former Navy coach stepping away after 40 seasons on the sidelines

By PAUL NEWBERRY  
Associated Press

ATLANTA — Paul Johnson, the longest-serving Georgia Tech coach in a half-century and architect of a triple-option offense that was an anomaly among Power Five schools, announced his retirement Wednesday after 11 seasons with the Yellow Jackets.

The 61-year-old Johnson revealed the surprising decision after meeting with his players. It came just four days after Georgia Tech closed the regular season with a lopsided loss to No. 4 Georgia.

Johnson, who also coached at Georgia Southern and Navy, compiled a career record of 82-59 at the Atlantic Coast Conference school, including eight bowl appearances and three trips to the league championship game.

He will stick around for another month, leading the Yellow Jackets for the final time in their bowl game. Most projections have them going to the Military Bowl on Dec. 31.

"After 40 years of coaching, it's time to take a break," Johnson said in a statement. "My family has sacrificed a lot over the years. I want to watch my daughter (Kaitlyn, a professional opera singer) perform and do some things with my wife (Susan) that we've never had a chance to do. It's been a great run for the last 11 years here on the Flats. I'm proud of what we've accomplished and am looking forward to having the chance to coach this team one last time at the end of the game next month."

Johnson planned to discuss his decision at a Thursday morning news conference. During an interview with WXIA-TV outside Bobby Dodd Stadium, he said the decision to retire was entirely his but didn't rule out a return to coaching.

"I've been thinking about it for a while," he said. "I'm not sure I'm done coaching, but I need a break. I'm going to take some time off with the family and decide if I like it. If it works, it'll be great. If it doesn't, I'll resurface somewhere else."

"It's been a good run," he added. "I'll always be a Tech fan."

This season, the Yellow Jackets bounced



ANNIE RICE/AP

Paul Johnson speaks during a press conference about his retirement on Thursday in Atlanta. Johnson, the longest-serving Georgia Tech coach in a half-century, said "it's time to take a break" after 11 seasons with the team.

back from a 1-3 start to finish 7-5, winning four straight games before a 45-21 loss at Georgia last Saturday.

Georgia Tech finished 5-3 in the ACC, its first winning record in conference play since 2014.

Johnson is best known for his triple-option offense, which produced gaudy rushing statistics but was criticized for being one-dimensional and out of touch with today's wide-open offensive schemes. The Yellow Jackets lead the nation with an average of almost 335 yards per game on the ground, but they completed only 11 passes in their last five games.

Georgia Tech athletic director Todd Stansbury praised Johnson for his long tenure at the school. He demonstrated his support for the coach this past spring by working out a two-year extension that ran through the 2022 season. Johnson's current deal paid him roughly \$3 million a season.

Bobby Dodd, Bill Alexander and John

**"I think Kenny and I probably have built each of our teams off of the model that (Johnson) built for us."**

Jeff Monken

Army coach, on the influence Paul Johnson had on both he and Navy coach Ken Niumatalolo. Johnson announced his retirement Wednesday after 11 seasons with the Georgia Tech.

Heisman — all members of the College Football Hall of Fame — were the only coaches to serve longer and post more wins at Georgia Tech.

"I was saddened when Coach Johnson informed me that he was going to step down as our head coach," Stansbury said. "Not only is he Georgia Tech's winningest head coach in more than 50 years but he is also an incredible mentor for the young men in our football program and has helped develop countless student-athletes that have gone on to great success after graduation." Johnson's overall record is 189-98, with only four losing seasons in his 22 years as a head coach.

He guided Georgia Southern to a 62-10 mark and a pair of FCS national championships before moving to Navy in 2002. After a 2-10 mark in his debut year, the Midshipmen ripped off five straight winning seasons and bowl appearances. He never lost to Army, going 6-0 against the Cadets with an average margin of victory of more than 29 points.

"Those were some really good teams with some really great players and a terrific coach in Paul Johnson," Army coach Jeff Monken said Wednesday.

Johnson still has ties to the Army-Navy rivalry.

Ken Niumatalolo worked under Johnson and succeeded him as head coach of the Midshipmen. Monken also worked on Johnson's staff at both Navy and Georgia Tech.

"I think Kenny and I probably have built each of our teams off of the model that Paul Johnson built for us," Monken said. "My personality as a coach, my style probably comes as much from him as anybody. I see those same things in Kenny."

## Bulldogs' offense bracing Crimson Tide's test

By CHARLES ODUM  
Associated Press

ATHENS, Ga. — Georgia's offense is peaking just in time for its ultimate stress test against Alabama.

The No. 4 Bulldogs (11-1, No. 4 CFP) scored a combined 111 points in their final two regular-season wins over UMass and Georgia Tech. Georgia stacked an impressive string of eight consecutive quarters without a punt over its final three games.

The challenge for Jake Fromm and the Bulldogs is to keep piling on the points against a stout Alabama defense and keep pace with the powerful Crimson Tide. A high-scoring game may be Georgia's best path to an upset win and repeat Southeastern Conference championship on Saturday.



Fromm

Fromm has thrown 24 touchdown passes, including a combined 14 to Riley Ridley and Mecole Hardman. Freshman Justin Fields, best known for his running skills, has thrown four touchdown passes.

"I think it's going to be the best challenge we've had, honestly," said Alabama safety Xavier McKinney.

As usual, No. 1 Alabama (12-0, No. 1 CFP) has relied on strong defense. It is a rematch of last season's national championship game, a 26-23 overtime win for the Crimson Tide.

Alabama boasts its customary top-six national rankings in scoring defense and total defense. The defense has been overshadowed by quarterback Tua Tagovailoa's big year, capped by his five touchdown passes in last week's 52-21 win over Auburn.

Fromm said he sees some of the same players back from the Alabama defense he faced at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in last season's national championship game. Since Georgia coach Kirby Smart is the former longtime Alabama defensive coordinator, Fromm said the Crimson Tide's defense also reminds him of the Georgia unit he faces in practice.

"Yeah, they definitely have some returning players," Fromm said. "And they have some really good players. But schematically, they're doing a lot of similar stuff they did last year, very similar to our defense. And I think it's just kind of very similar to what we see every single day in practice, so hopefully we can be very successful with that."

The year ago, Fromm was completing his freshman season while relying heavily on senior tailbacks Nick Chubb and Sony Michel. Chubb and Michel became the first Georgia tandem to reach 1,000 yards rushing in the same season.

Both accurate and efficient, Fromm has been more than a game manager in his second season. He threw for four touchdowns in the 45-21 win over Georgia Tech despite attempting only 16 passes. He has completed 69.1 percent of his passes, a school-record pace that ranks eighth in the nation.

"They've got a great group of receivers, a lot of guys who are athletic, very talented, speedy," McKinney said. "And then a great quarterback who makes good reads and good throws, accurate throws."

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

## Offense carrying Sooners' soft 'D'

By CLIFF BRUNT  
Associated Press

NORMAN, Okla.—Oklahoma's offense is statistically one of the best in college football history.

It still might not be good enough to get the Sooners a Big 12 title or a slot in the College Football Playoff.

Coach Lincoln Riley's team leads the nation in total offense and scoring offense. The Sooners average 8.9 yards per play, ahead of the FBS record of 8.6 set by Hawaii in 2006, and they have scored at least 45 points in eight straight games.

And yet, they continue to find themselves in close games. Oklahoma has allowed at least 40 points in each of its past four games — somehow, all wins. Included are a five-point win over Texas Tech, a one-point win over Oklahoma State and a three-point win over West Virginia.

Each week, Riley gets asked whether Oklahoma's offense is tired of carrying the team. "Everybody wants to be great on offense and great on defense both," he said. "That's everybody's aspiration. It doesn't always happen that way. It's not easy to do. Different teams win different ways. To me, the bottom line is you either win or you don't win."

In their worst defensive performance yet by many measures, the Sooners gave up 704 yards last

week but still edged West Virginia 59-56. The offense likely will need to carry the load again if the fifth-ranked Sooners (11-1) are to win their fourth straight conference title Saturday in the Big 12 championship game against ninth-ranked Texas (9-3).

And Riley doesn't care how high the score gets, as long as the game ends in a Sooners victory. A win would put Oklahoma in position to possibly reach the playoff for the second straight year and the third time in four years.

"I'm confident in the way we play ball at Oklahoma," he said. "I'm confident in the way this league plays ball, the teams we have top to bottom in this league. We know how hard it is to win this thing. So no, we're going to keep winning and hopefully keep checking 'em off the list and move forward."

Oklahoma's offense starts with quarterback Kyler Murray, the Heisman Trophy candidate and first-round Major League Baseball selection by Oakland. He didn't just replace last year's Heisman winner, Baker Mayfield — he's actually been better. His passer rating is higher than Mayfield's, plus he's run for 853 yards — rushing numbers not seen for an Oklahoma quarterback since the school's wishbone era in the 1970s and '80s.

Murray believes his running ability puts him ahead of the



COOPER NEIL/AP

Oklahoma quarterback Kyler Murray scrambles against Texas on Oct. 6 in Dallas. The Sooners face Texas again in the Big 12 championship game on Saturday.

Heisman pack.

"I don't vote," he said. "All I can do is go out there and play on Saturday. If they watch the games, they see how I play or whatever it is. Do I feel like I deserve to win? Yeah, but at the end of the day all I can do is go out and play."

The Sooners feature speedster Marquise Brown at receiver. The Biletnikoff Award semifinalist leads the Sooners with 1,264 yards and 10 touchdowns. With his cousin, Pittsburgh Steelers wideout Antonio Brown watching last week against West Virginia, he caught 11 passes for 243 yards and two touchdowns. CeeDee Lamb isn't far behind with 51 catches for 882 yards and nine scores.

Oklahoma's running game has

excelled despite star running back Rodney Anderson being lost for the season in the second game. The Sooners average a nation-leading 7.0 yards per carry, a total that ranks second in school history behind the 1971 squad.

Kennedy Brooks, a freshman, has 993 yards rushing and leads the nation with 9.6 yards per carry. Trey Sermon, a power runner, has rushed for 863 yards this season. Murray adds another dimension with his breakaway speed.

Murray said he thinks the running game has improved since Texas' 48-45 win earlier this season.

"It was the middle of the season," he said. "You've got to work some things out, figure yourself out as an offense. Right now I feel

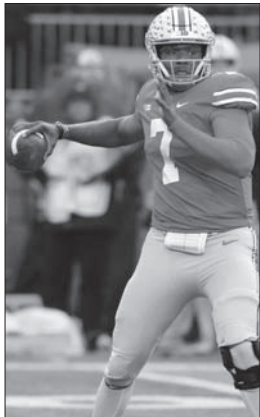
like we know what we're capable of. I mean, we've known what we're capable of, but it's one thing to say it and then doing it. Right now I think we're playing pretty good football. I think they'll have to respect that. We'll see what happens."

The Sooners rank eighth nationally in both passing and rushing yards per game and have gained at least 300 yards rushing and passing in the same game five times.

"They complement each other," Riley said. "When you're playing the way you want, that's the beautiful thing about it. They go hand in hand with each other. The run game wouldn't be nearly as good without the throw game and then vice versa."

## Haskins emerges as leader as Buckeyes hit their stride

By MITCH STACY  
Associated Press



JAY LAPORTE/AP

Ohio State quarterback Dwayne Haskins throws a pass against Michigan during the first half last week. He threw a school record-tying six touchdowns in a 62-39 win over the Wolverines.

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Dwayne Haskins Jr. has been throwing touchdown passes and impressing NFL scouts all season, but Ohio State coach Urban Meyer thinks his quarterback became a fully legitimate leader once he showed he was willing to run the ball.

That didn't happen until two weeks ago in the narrow overtime win over Maryland, when Haskins — a pro-style, drop-back passer — flashed his toughness in short-yardage situations and rushed for three touchdowns, including one in overtime.

"He dropped his pads at the toughest time in the game against a very good defense and got that yard," Meyer said. "I can't tell you how many times we've told him and how many times I've told him, the job of the quarterback is to get the first down."

Said Haskins: "I definitely thought that gave the team an energy and a certain vibe for me. And I thought the team fed off that."

Last week against Michigan, Haskins, a redshirt sophomore, made a statement on the team's first offensive play, pulling the ball and running for a 9-yard gain. He'd go on to throw a school record-tying six touchdowns passes in the 62-39 upset of the Wolverines that put the Buckeyes in the Big Ten Championship and back into the

national championship discussion.

Haskins leads the No. 6 Buckeyes against No. 21 Northwestern in the conference championship game on Saturday, with a chance to get back to the College Football Playoff if some other pieces fall into place.

"Coaches aren't on the field, there's 10 other guys looking at him on every snap and he better get the right answer, and they better trust and believe in him," Meyer said.

The 21-year-old Haskins has become a more demanding and vocal leader on the field as he achieved more success, taking on a greater role in directing and motivating teammates, even when it was uncomfortable.

"You get that vibe that you're able to do things that you haven't been able to do before," Haskins said. "Each game, each practice, you feel a little bit more respect and energy and guys leaning toward you to get the energy from you."

Fifth-year senior receiver and captain Terry McLaurin said Haskins' development has coincided with Ohio State putting together a complete and dominating team game against Michigan.

"He's invested (from) the standpoint of being a leader, motivating the young guys, motivating the offensive line, the defense if they're struggling and just being more of the face of our team," McLaurin said.

Whether or not Haskins departs early for the NFL — he's projected to be a first-

round pick — he'll go into the record books as having the best season of any quarterback in Big Ten history. His 4,081 yards and 42 touchdowns are conference records. The touchdown total is best in the nation and the passing yardage is second behind Gardner Minshew at Washington State.

The Buckeyes have the No. 2 offense nationally (543.9 yards per game), behind only Oklahoma (583.9).

He said there will come a time when he'll think about leaving for the NFL after just one year as a starter at Ohio State, but right now he's focused on beating Northwestern. He's got the size (6-foot-3, 220 pounds), the strong arm and the quick release demanded of an NFL quarterback.

"It's a whirlwind," he acknowledged this week. "I'm just really blessed."

Haskins, a likely Heisman Trophy finalist, has been Big Ten offensive player of the week for a record six times, one more than Buckeyes quarterback Troy Smith in his Heisman Trophy-winning season of 2006.

"He is a complete quarterback," Northwestern coach Pat Fitzgerald said. "First of all, what jumps out is his poise, his accuracy, his understanding of the offense, and he just does a phenomenal job of taking what the defense gives him. And to have that touchdown ratio of 42 to seven is spectacular. If I had a Heisman Trophy ballot, I'd vote for him."

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL



COOPER NEILL/AP

Oklahoma wide receiver Marquise Brown gives the "horns down" gesture as he celebrates after scoring a touchdown on a 77-yard reception against Texas on Oct. 6 in Dallas. Later in the season, West Virginia was penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct after flashing the same gesture against Texas.

# Texas-OU rivalry always has plenty of bad blood

By JIM VERTUNO  
Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — The Texas-Oklahoma rivalry is never short on bad blood between the Big 12 border states.

Whether it's "horns down," Darrell Royal accusing Barry Switzer of spying or Brian Bosworth's critique of vomit-inducing burnt orange, a rivalry that dates to 1900 has more than its share of antics and lore. And the 114th meeting Saturday — the second this season and with the Big 12 championship at stake — is well on its way to producing its own.

Dial back to Oct. 6, when No. 9 Texas beat No. 4 Oklahoma 48-45, a game that showcased two stellar performances from the opposing quarterbacks. Sam Ehlinger passed for 314 yards, ran for 72 yards and accounted for five touchdowns for the Longhorns while Oklahoma's Kyler Murray passed for 304 yards, ran for 92 and had five total TDs.

It was their meeting on the field after the game that added a chapter to the simmering rivalry and brings a new wrinkle to the rematch. Video clips showed the two players appearing to exchange some unfriendly words, and Ehlinger patted Murray on the top of his helmet.

Oklahoma is undefeated since that game and Murray is a top Heisman Trophy contender. He is also clearly still upset about whatever was said between the two. Asked Monday if he respects Ehlinger's game, Murray said, "I have no comment." A few hours



**Big 12 championship  
Texas vs. Oklahoma**  
AFN-Sports  
6 p.m. Saturday CET  
2 a.m. Sunday JKT

later, Ehlinger tweeted "Ok. Cool. Hook'em."

Oklahoma coach Lincoln Riley said he asked for some guidance from the Big 12 whether his players will be penalized if they flash the "horns down" hand signal on Saturday. The gesture drew flags for West Virginia when the Mountaineers played Texas.

"I will make sure it's fully clear to our guys what they can and can't do," Riley said.

Of course, telling Oklahoma players they can't do it in the game against Texas might be the same as asking them to play while handcuffed. The Big 12 on Wednesday reiterated its position that unsportsmanlike conduct calls are made at the discretion of game officials.

The animosity goes back generations.

Royal was a Sooners player in 1947 when the Longhorns won the Red River Showdown 34-14, the last year in an eight-year Texas winning streak. Sooners fans were so incensed by the of-

ficiating they were throwing soda bottles and seat cushions on the field. A car was brought on the field to get the officials safely out of the stadium.

The series was never hotter than the dust-up between Royal and Switzer in '76.

Royal was winding down a national-championship coaching career at Texas and his on-field success was waning while the Sooners were on a tear.

Royal accused Switzer of sending spies to scout the Longhorns, and challenged Switzer, his assistant coach and the alleged spy to take a polygraph test with a \$10,000 reward if they could pass it. Royal also referred to the Sooners as "sorry bastards." That prompted Oklahoma fans to chant the slogan outside Royal's Dallas hotel and during the game, which ended in a tie.

President Gerald Ford was at the game for the coin toss but even he couldn't get the coaches to speak to each other before the game.

Things were still going strong in the 80s when Bosworth came on the scene. He was a freshman who hadn't even played Texas yet when he unleashed on the Longhorns before the 1984 game: "I hate Texas, I hate (Texas coach) Freddie Akers and I hate that burnt orange color. It reminds me of people's vomit."

The Longhorns and Sooners played to a 15-15 tie that left everyone mad.

AP Sports Writer Cliff Brun contributed from Norman, Okla.

## Ohio State knows enormity of game

By MITCH STACY  
Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Urban Meyer contends that nobody around Ohio State will be talking about the College Football Playoff this week, even though the Buckeyes inserted themselves back into the national championship conversation with a blowout of Michigan.

Ohio State won the Big Ten East on Saturday with the 62-39 rout of the Wolverines and has a chance for a second consecutive Big Ten title if it can beat No. 21 Northwestern in the conference championship Saturday.

A spot in the playoff could still come, but the Buckeyes have to win big in Indianapolis.

"I don't believe other than kids staring at their phones that there will be a lot of conversation about it," Meyer said about the potential for a playoff spot. "You get a ring when you win this championship, and that's always the conversation around here."

Asked on a conference call with reporters whether Ohio State is worthy of being in the playoff discussion right now, Meyer said, "I don't think we are yet."

"Certain parts of our team certainly are," he said. "And certain parts are not. But I would imagine that there are probably other teams in that same boat."

A month ago it seemed like a stretch that Ohio State (11-1, 8-1 Big Ten) would be preparing for the trip to Indianapolis.

The Buckeyes were blown out by unranked Purdue on Oct. 20, didn't look great in the next three games and were underdogs entering the regular-season finale against No. 4 Michigan and the nation's best defense.

Then came a complete thumping of the Wolverines that suddenly brought all of the Buckeyes' goals back into focus. They jumped four spots in the AP Top 25 to No. 6 and to No. 5 in the latest playoff rankings.

"I'm going to be very hard on everybody this week," Meyer promised.



**Big Ten championship  
Northwestern vs. Ohio State**  
AFN-Atlantic  
2 a.m. Sunday CET  
10 a.m. Sunday JKT

Northwestern coach Pat Fitzgerald said he won't have any problem keeping the focus on the game. This is a pretty big deal.

No. 21 Northwestern started 1-3, losing early season games to Duke, Akron and Michigan. But the Wildcats swept every other Big Ten West team and clinched a berth in the title game with two games left.

The Wildcats are worthy, Fitzgerald said.

"If you go back and watch, especially the Akron and Duke games, we beat ourselves," he said. "We didn't play very well, we didn't coach very well, and it was very disappointing. I think our leadership really stepped up, kept grinding, kept working to get better and the credit all goes to our players."

The Wildcats (8-4, 8-1 Big Ten) are in the Big Ten championship for the first time since the conference was divided and the game created in 2011. They haven't won a conference crown since 2000. He said he can see a day where the title game might mean more for a team known more for its graduation rate than consistently competing with the big boys.

"I think it's great right now that every game matters in college football," Fitzgerald said. "I think these conference championships obviously will have a huge influence on who makes the final four. And from a school that maybe is a historical 'have-not' compared with a historical 'have,' I like that you have every opportunity to win your way into the discussion."



JAY LAPRETE/AP

Left to right: Ohio State's Damon Arnette, Shaun Wade and Kendall Sheffield celebrate with a fan after beating Michigan 62-39.



## NFL

# Steelers' Conner wants to drop fumble woes

By WILL GRAVES  
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Ben Roethlisberger cut off the question mid-sentence. The quicker to dismiss it, the better.

No, the Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback stressed, there are no issues about running back James Conner's ability to hold onto the ball even after Conner's fumble late in the third quarter on Sunday in Denver swung momentum to the Broncos in what became a 24-17 loss that ended Pittsburgh's six-game winning streak.

"I'll stop you now," Roethlisberger said Wednesday. "There is no concern and we have all the confidence in him. We are going to ride with James because he's our guy."

Conner took responsibility for the mistake, saying he didn't do a good job covering up before getting hit by Denver's Bradley Roby at the end of a 23-yard reception. The fumble was Conner's fourth of the season, tying him with Chicago's Tarik Cohen and Dallas' Ezekiel Elliott for most in the NFL by a non-quarterback.

"It's correctable," Conner said. "It's not something that's going to be a problem for me."

It can't be if the Steelers (7-3-1) want to lock down their fifth straight playoff appearance. Pittsburgh righted its season by relying heavily on Conner after falling into a 1-2-1 hole. He averaged 17.3 yards from scrimmage during a four-game stretch from Oct. 7-Nov. 4, a surge that earned him AFC offensive player of the month honors for October and made the absence of two-time All-Pro Le'Veon Bell a no-issue.

Those numbers have taken a steep drop since Conner left a blowout of Carolina on Nov. 8 with a concussion. He had just 15 touches in a comeback win over Jacksonville on Nov. 18, a number that would have crept up to 16 if he hadn't let a pass go through his hands on Pittsburgh's final drive that would have been a walk-in touchdown. That drop became moot when the Steelers found a way to win anyway.

Facing the NFL's 27th-ranked run defense last Sunday in Denver, the Steelers opted to have Roethlisberger throw 58 times. Conner finished with 17 touches against the Broncos and just one after the fumble, a 1-yard run on second-and-goal from the Denver 3 with 1:53 left. Roethlisberger faked a handoff to Conner on the next play and threw a game-ending pick in the end zone.

Conner shrugged when asked about his



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

Pittsburgh running back James Conner (30) tries to elude Denver linebacker Todd Davis during the Steelers' win Sunday.

drop in opportunities in recent weeks. The former college star at Pittsburgh understands he's just a second-year player who has hardly earned the right to start making demands.

"(Offensive coordinator) Randy (Fichtner) has a game plan," Conner said. "We talk about it in the hotel before the game and that's just what it is. I'm in no position. It doesn't matter what I like. My job is just to go out there and execute."

Maybe, but the guys blocking for Conner wouldn't mind it if they saw his No. 30 coming up behind them at the line of scrimmage with a head of steam.

"We got to get him the ball, get him back heated up again, getting him some runs he feels comfortable with, get him more involved in the game plan," center Maurkice Pouncey said. "Obviously whenever he was doing things, he looked really, really good out there."

He let one drop in the fourth quarter in Cleveland in Week 1, which set the stage for a comeback that allowed the Browns

to rally from a 14-point deficit and force a tie. He caught a break in Week 5 against Atlanta when the ball squirted free and rolled out of bounds as he tried to break a tackle inside the Falcons 10. In a rematch with Cleveland on Oct. 28, the Browns were up 6-0 when Conner fumbled at the Pittsburgh 27. Fullback Roosevelt Nix fell on it and Pittsburgh — feeding Conner regularly on a day he ran for 146 yards and two scores — got it together in time to win going away.

Steelers coach Mike Tomlin knows the Los Angeles Chargers (8-3) will test Conner when they visit on Sunday.

"When you got some tape with some balls on the ground that people use as motivation, I know we do," Tomlin said.

Conner will use it as motivation even as he continues to adjust to the idea that for the first time in his football life, he's not the focal point of the offense.

"You play the same teams over and over again, so you have to switch it up," Conner said. "That's just the way life goes."

## By the numbers

4

Number of times Pittsburgh Steelers running back James Conner has fumbled this season, tied for the league high.

7

Number of times Conner fumbled during his college career at Pitt.

SOURCE: Associated Press



DUANE BURNESON/AP

Backup Chicago quarterback Chase Daniel, who led the Bears to a defeat of the Lions last week, may start this week because of starting quarterback Mitchell Trubisky's injured shoulder.

# Daniel ready to step in for Bears

By GENE CHAMBERLAIN  
Associated Press

LAKE FOREST, Ill. — This time Chase Daniel has a little preparation.

Daniel, Chicago's backup quarterback, last week helped defeat the Detroit Lions 23-16 as a replacement for injured Mitchell Trubisky without benefit of a real practice.

With the Bears preparing Wednesday to face the New York Giants on Sunday, Daniel took the snaps with the first team while Trubisky practiced only on a limited basis because of the shoulder injury he suffered Nov. 18 against the Minnesota Vikings.

"It'll be good to actually get

some timing down with the receivers and tight ends and running backs, although I thought it was pretty good last week, too, for not really taking a full-speed rep all week," Daniel said. "There's always stuff you can grow on."

"I'm a perfectionist, so what I try to do is look at the negatives of the game and try to improve on it. And there were 10 incompletions; some of those should've been completions. Four sacks; too many, those were all on me."

Coach Matt Nagy said it's possible it will be a "game-time thing" regarding his starting quarterback decision for this week.

"It will end up probably being day to day here, but when I say

that, if he (Trubisky) starts feeling better and we feel like we need to make a decision earlier, we'll do that," Nagy said.

The Bears are not releasing details of the shoulder injury or its extent, but Nagy said again it is not a long-term situation and added there is no limit to Trubisky's range of motion. Nagy said the week away seemed to benefit Trubisky health-wise.

"I think the time was good for him," Nagy said. "I don't know his exact pain tolerance or level right now. But I definitely think his arm's up right now, and we'll just have to kind of keep communicating with him on a day-to-day basis as to where he's at."



# GAME DAY

WEEK 13

TELEVISED GAMES



## Marquee matchup

### LA Chargers (8-3) at Pittsburgh Steelers (7-3-1)

AFN-Sports, 2 a.m. Monday CET; 10 a.m. Monday JKT

Indianapolis Colts (6-5)  
at Jacksonville Jaguars (3-8)

AFN-Atlantic  
7 p.m. Sunday CET  
3 a.m. Monday JKT  
**Series:** Colts lead 23-12.

**Last meeting:** Colts beat Jaguars 29-26, Nov. 11, 2018.

**Notes:** Jaguars have won two of past three meetings. ... Colts QB Andrew Luck completed 30 of 37 passes for 343 yards and three TDs last week against Dolphins. ... Colts RB Marlon Mack ranks fourth in NFL with 522 rushing yards since Week 6. ... Jaguars QB Cody Kessler will start first game with Jaguars.



Los Angeles Rams (10-1)  
at Detroit Lions (4-7)

AFN-Sports  
7 p.m. Sunday CET  
3 a.m. Monday JKT  
**Series:** Rams lead 43-40-1.

**Last meeting:** Lions beat Rams 31-28, Oct. 16, 2016.

**Notes:** Lions have three of past four meetings. ... Rams rank second in NFL in yards per game (448.6) and third in points per game (35.4). ... Rams QB Jared Goff passed for 413 yards and four TDs in Week 11 victory over Chiefs. ... Lions RB LeGarrette Blount rushed for 88 yards and two TDs in Week 12 loss to Bears.

**SERIES RECORD:** Steelers lead 22-7.  
**LAST MEETING:** Steelers beat Chargers 24-20, Oct. 12, 2015.

**LAST WEEK:** Chargers beat Cardinals 45-10; Steelers lost to Broncos 24-17.  
**CHARGERS OFFENSE:** OVERALL (6), RUSH (8), PASS (10).

**CHARGERS DEFENSE:** OVERALL (9), RUSH (13), PASS (7).

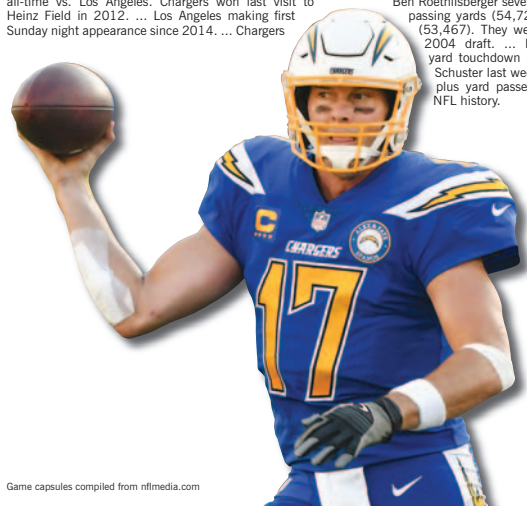
**STEELERS OFFENSE:** OVERALL (4), RUSH (6), PASS (2).

**STEELERS DEFENSE:** OVERALL (6), RUSH (9), PASS (6).

**STREAKS, STATS AND NOTES:** Steelers have won four of last five meetings. ... Pittsburgh 15-3 at home all-time vs. Los Angeles. Chargers won last visit to Heinz Field in 2012. ... Los Angeles making first Sunday night appearance since 2014. ... Chargers

QB Philip Rivers coming off game when he set NFL record for highest completion percentage (96.6) and tied mark for consecutive completions (25). Rivers also has multi-TD game in every outing this season. ... RB Melvin Gordon will not play due to MCL sprain in knee. ... RB Austin Ekeler leads league in average yards per scrimmage touch (7.5). ... WR Keenan Allen has caught TD in three straight games. ... Defense has allowed league-low 15.8 points in past eight games. ... Rookie S Derwin James only player in league with 75-plus tackles (78), three-plus sacks (3-1-2) and two-plus interceptions (3). ... Pittsburgh's six-game winning streak snapped last week in loss to Broncos. ... Steelers are 27-8 in prime-time games at Heinz Field. ... Pittsburgh is NFL-best 18-3 in December games since 2013. ... Steelers QB Ben Roethlisberger seventh all-time in career passing yards (54,729). Rivers is eighth (53,467). They were selected in same 2004 draft. ... Roethlisberger's 97-yard touchdown pass to JuJu Smith-Schuster last week gave him four 90-plus yard passes in career, most in NFL history.

— Associated Press



**Chargers  
quarterback  
Philip Rivers**  
JOHN CORDES/AP



Kansas City Chiefs (9-2)  
at Oakland Raiders (2-9)

AFN-Sports2  
10 p.m. Sunday CET  
6 a.m. Monday JKT  
**Series:** Chiefs lead 61-52-2.

**Last meeting:** Chiefs beat Raiders 26-15, Dec. 10, 2017.

**Notes:** Chiefs have won six of past seven meetings. ... Chiefs QB Patrick Mahomes completed 33 of 46 passes for 478 yards and six TDs in Week 11 loss to Rams. ... Raiders QB Derek Carr passes for 417 yards and three TDs in last home meeting with Chiefs. Has 70-plus completion percentage in past three at home.



Minnesota Vikings (6-4-1)  
at New England Patriots (8-3)

AFN-Sports  
10:25 p.m. Sunday CET  
6:25 a.m. Monday JKT  
**Series:** Patriots lead 8-4.

**Last meeting:** Patriots beat Vikings 30-7, Sept. 14, 2014.

**Notes:** Patriots have won past four meetings. ... Vikings WR Adam Thielen had eight catches for 125 yards and a TD last week. He has a TD catch in seven of his past eight games. ... Patriots rookie RB Sony Michel set career highs with 133 rushing yards and 145 scrimmage yards last week.

Game capsules compiled from nflmedia.com

Also on AFN:  
New York Jets (3-8) at Tennessee Titans (5-6), AFN-Atlantic, 10 p.m. Sunday CET; 6 a.m. Monday JKT

## EXPANDED STANDINGS

### American Conference

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	Home	Away	AFC	NFC	Div
New England	8	3	0	.727	307	249	5-0-0	3-3-0	6-2-0	2-1-0	3-0-0
Buffalo	5	6	0	.455	223	283	4-1-0	1-5-0	4-4-0	1-2-0	2-1-0
Miami	4	7	0	.364	161	272	2-3-0	2-4-0	3-5-0	1-2-0	1-1-0
N.Y. Jets	3	8	0	.273	221	281	2-4-0	1-4-0	2-6-0	1-2-0	0-4-0
Houston	8	3	0	.727	273	222	4-1-0	4-2-0	6-2-0	2-1-0	3-1-0
Indianapolis	6	5	0	.545	325	273	4-2-0	2-3-0	6-4-0	1-1-0	2-1-0
Tennessee	5	6	0	.455	195	223	3-1-0	2-5-0	3-6-0	2-0-0	2-2-0
Jacksonville	3	8	0	.273	197	243	2-4-0	1-4-0	2-6-0	1-2-0	0-3-0
Pittsburgh	7	3	1	.682	316	249	3-2-0	4-1-1	4-3-1	3-0-0	3-1-1
Baltimore	6	5	0	.545	271	198	4-2-0	2-3-0	6-3-0	0-2-0	2-3-0
Cincinnati	5	6	0	.455	276	347	3-3-0	2-3-0	3-4-0	2-2-0	1-3-0
Cleveland	4	6	1	.409	253	283	3-2-1	1-4-0	3-4-1	1-2-0	2-1-1
Kansas City	9	2	0	.818	404	294	5-0-0	4-2-0	7-1-0	2-1-0	3-0-0
L.A. Chargers	8	3	0	.727	307	219	4-2-0	4-1-0	5-2-0	2-1-0	2-2-0
Denver	5	6	0	.455	252	253	3-3-0	2-3-0	3-5-0	2-1-0	2-2-0
Oakland	2	9	0	.182	187	327	1-4-0	1-5-0	1-6-0	1-3-0	0-3-0

### National Conference

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	Home	Away	NFC	AFC	Div
Dallas	6	5	0	.545	234	213	4-1-0	2-4-0	5-3-0	1-2-0	3-1-0
Washington	6	5	0	.545	220	229	3-3-0	3-2-0	6-3-0	0-2-0	2-1-0
Philadelphia	5	6	0	.455	230	253	3-3-0	2-3-0	3-5-0	2-1-0	2-1-0
N.Y. Giants	3	8	0	.273	237	288	1-4-0	2-4-0	2-7-0	1-1-0	0-4-0
New Orleans	10	1	0	.909	409	256	5-1-0	5-0-0	7-1-0	3-0-0	2-1-0
Carolina	6	5	0	.545	287	282	5-1-0	1-4-0	4-4-0	2-1-0	1-1-0
Atlanta	4	7	0	.364	280	307	3-3-0	1-4-0	4-4-0	0-3-0	2-2-0
Tampa Bay	4	7	0	.364	294	338	3-2-0	1-5-0	3-5-0	1-2-0	1-2-0
Chicago	8	3	0	.727	317	211	5-1-0	3-2-0	6-1-0	2-2-0	3-1-0
Minnesota	6	4	1	.591	265	246	4-2-0	2-2-1	5-3-1	1-1-0	2-1-1
Green Bay	4	6	1	.409	264	367	4-0-1	0-6-0	2-5-1	2-1-0	1-2-1
Detroit	4	7	0	.364	238	286	3-3-0	1-4-0	2-6-0	2-1-0	1-3-0
L.A. Rams	10	1	0	.909	389	282	6-0-0	4-1-0	6-1-0	4-0-0	4-0-0
Seattle	6	5	0	.545	276	243	2-2-0	4-3-0	5-3-0	1-2-0	1-2-0
Arizona	2	9	0	.182	155	293	1-5-0	1-4-0	2-5-0	0-4-0	2-2-0
San Francisco	2	9	0	.182	239	293	2-3-0	0-6-0	1-7-0	1-2-0	0-3-0

## REST OF THE SCHEDULE

Carolina at Tampa Bay  
Arizona at Green Bay  
Denver at Cincinnati  
Baltimore at Atlanta  
Chicago at N.Y. Giants  
Cleveland at Houston  
Buffalo at Miami  
San Francisco at Seattle  
Monday's game  
Washington at Philadelphia

## NEXT WEEK

Thursday, Dec. 6  
Jacksonville at Tennessee  
Sunday, Dec. 9  
New England at Tampa Bay  
N.Y. Giants at Washington  
Atlanta at Green Bay  
Indianapolis at Houston  
N.Y. Jets at Buffalo  
Carolina at Cleveland  
Philadelphia at Dallas  
Baltimore at Kansas City  
Cincinnati at L.A. Chargers  
Denver at San Francisco  
Detroit at Arizona  
Philadelphia at Chicago  
Pittsburgh at Oakland  
L.A. Rams at Chicago  
Monday, Dec. 10  
Minnesota at Seattle

## SPORTS



**Just hold on**  
Steelers' Conner takes responsibility  
for late-game fumble » **Page 62**

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

## Run it back

Alabama, Georgia  
meeting for title  
game rematch



VASHA HUNT, ABOVE, JOSHUA L. JONES, LEFT/AP

Crimson Tide quarterback Tua Tagovailoa smiles during the second half of Saturday's 52-21 win over Auburn in Tuscaloosa, Ala. A big game against Georgia on Saturday could cement Tagovailoa's Heisman Trophy bid.

BY JOHN ZENOR  
Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala.  
ello again, Georgia and Alabama.

For the second time in less than 11 months, the two Southeastern Conference powers are set

to meet at Atlanta's Mercedes-Benz Stadium with a championship on the line in a mentor-versus-protégé coaching showdown. Tua Tagovailoa's back, too, this time as anything but an understudy.

Kirby Smart's fourth-ranked Georgia Bulldogs (11-1, 7-1 SEC) get another crack

**SEE REMATCH ON PAGE 59**

## Inside:

■ Georgia Tech's Johnson retiring, Page 59 ■ Oklahoma leaning on offense, Page 60

Georgia coach  
Kirby Smart

So far, season has been full of surprises » NBA, Page 55



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